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# The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

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The portrayal of Jews in US films

## The portrayal of Jews in US films

Battle for the Masters

## Battle for the Masters



# Children 'to learn finance'

## City-led group will urge lessons on responsibility

Patrick Donovan and Lisa Buckingham

**R**ADICAL proposals for teaching every schoolchild in the country how to manage their money are expected to be put to the Treasury by a government-backed task force charged with looking at ways of turning Britain into a share-owning democracy.

The committee, led by some of the City's most powerful financiers, has concluded that the world of work is so precarious that secondary schoolchildren should be taught to take responsibility for their own financial affairs, the Guardian has learnt.

Ministers will be told that youngsters risk financial disaster unless their education equips them to make provision for pensions and other financial safeguards, as traditional full-time staff jobs disappear and state care is eroded.

The programme would include everything from pensions to life insurance and stock market investment, taught as a compulsory subject to every secondary schoolchild.

Additional coaching would be provided to help train teachers to oversee the training programme according to the committee, set up last August by the Stock Exchange to look at ways of widening share ownership.

Funding for the courses could come from the investment industry itself, according to documents circulating within the committee. They say: "We would like to see a personal finance money management course introduced into the school curriculum, as an examination subject, and in addition the financial services industry should be encouraged to fund a joint educational initiative in personal finance both in schools and further educational establishments."

The papers add: "It is clear that over the next 20 years and beyond, individuals are going to have to take greater personal responsibility for their own long-term financial security."

Led by the financier Sir Mark Weinberg, the committee includes directors from big City organisations including N.M. Rothschild, Abbey National and ProShare, the Stock Exchange body responsible for promoting small investors' interests.

With the backing of the Treasury Minister, David Heathcoat-Amory, the task force was launched last August to look at ways of reviving the Thatcherite dream of establishing a "share-owning democracy".

Ministers privately acknowledge that the Government's 16-year privatisation programme has failed to persuade the public to invest in the stock market, despite the sale of tens of billions of pounds' worth of state-owned assets at discount prices.

However, the task force is understood to have concluded that a far more radical approach to money management should be taken by the Government, because of the

huge economic uncertainties looming up over employment prospects in the run-up to the next century.

Yesterday members of the committee, which is expected to present its findings within the next few weeks, declined to comment.

But well-placed sources said proposals for money management to be made part of the education curriculum would form part of the committee's findings.

Teachers' unions were guarded in their response to the task force's forthcoming proposals. A spokeswoman for the National Union of Teachers said there would be enormous difficulties fitting personal finance lessons into an already overcrowded school day.

"Teachers try to include aspects of finance where they can slot it in, but after the requirements of the national curriculum are met, there is only a small amount of time left for other subjects," she said.

But the financial industry is expected to seize the opportunity to fund any schools money management programme.

A member of the Association of British Insurers said yesterday: "It is crucially important to let people know that the welfare state is not going to provide everything."

Even now an old age pension provides nothing like a decent standard of living. People have got to realise that care doesn't come free.

"Being able to talk to children would be useful for the nation as well as the individuals involved."

But Mr Major's attempts to pull his party together were undermined by criticism from his right-wingers that the party is risking defeat in the general election if it sticks to the centre ground.

Brian Jenkins beat even the Labour Party's most optimistic expectations by turning the Tories' 152 majority into a winning Labour margin of 12,782. The 22 per cent swing



Tony Blair with President Bill Clinton in the Oval Office at the White House yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: RUTH FREEMAN

# Clinton fetes cautiously triumphant Blair

Rebecca Smithers, and Patrick Wintour in Washington

**A** TRUMPHANT Tony Blair celebrated Labour's by-election victory by being feted in the White House by President Bill Clinton yesterday while warning his party that the general election was not in the bag.

John Major, whose Commons majority was whittled down to one, conceded that he was disappointed by one of the worst by-election defeats in living memory. Tory strategists began a post-mortem into the defeat with a much higher-than-expected swing of 22 per cent.

But Mr Major's attempts to pull his party together were undermined by criticism from his right-wingers that the party is risking defeat in the general election if it sticks to the centre ground.

Brian Jenkins beat even the Labour Party's most optimistic expectations by turning the Tories' 152 majority into a winning Labour margin of 12,782. The 22 per cent swing

was its second best result in any by-election, and was achieved in a seat in the Tory heartlands.

The by-election was caused by the death of the Conservative whip Sir David Lightbown in December. The Tory candidate, Jimmy James, effectively lost 60 per cent of his party's vote last time, but blamed the defeat — much worse than the Tories had feared — on a poor turnout by the party's supporters rather than the higher degree of switching claimed by Labour.

Yesterday, in his first public comments since the election result in the early hours, the Prime Minister admitted that he was disappointed by the result, but warned against consigning his Government to oblivion. He said he remained confident the Government's hard work would start to show results and underlined his determination "to get our message across" — a view echoed during the day by other Cabinet members.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, predicted that a rise in living standards over the next 12

months would secure a general election victory for the Tories despite last night's defeat. He insisted that there was still time to win over the voters, and he could see no advantage in an autumn election.

But John Redwood warned Mr Major that after the disappointing result, "the government must show it has listened to the worries of the electors". Criticising the Government's obsession with economic recovery, he said this was not enough, and that people also wanted assurances about public services — in particular education and health — and Britain's role in Europe. Without such measures to win back the lost support ... Labour would give our country away and damage our future."

Meanwhile, Mr Major will strongly resist any bids to unseat the Government before next spring, despite the prospect of some dangerously narrow Commons votes.

The Ulster Unionists said they were not seeking to terminate the life of his Government, though the defeat leaves their nine MPs in a

powerful position. The Tories are bracing themselves for a heavy defeat in the local government elections on May 2.

In Washington, Mr Blair spent 40 minutes in talks with Mr Clinton and several of his most senior advisers, which was the climax to a successful three day visit.

The five-star treatment given to Mr Blair by Mr Clinton indicates not just political sympathy with the Labour

leader, but a growing expectation that John Major will not be prime minister next year.

Before flying back to London last night, Mr Blair said: "This result shows very clearly we are a political force that has an appeal across the classes and across traditional political divides."

Blair is the bride of Bill, page 13; Leader comment, page 14

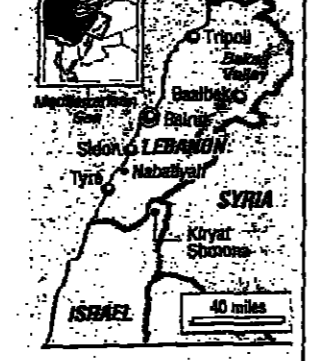
# Terrified Lebanese flee as Israel hits south

David Hirst in Beirut

**T**HE Israeli-Hizbullah fighting intensified dangerously yesterday as tens of thousands of Lebanese civilians fled southern towns and villages, and Israeli helicopters rocketed a Syrian army position in the heart of Beirut.

The chaotic civilian exodus from south Lebanon began in mid-morning, immediately after Israel warned that it would start bombing 45 towns and villages after 2.30pm yesterday in response to rocket attacks on northern Israel by Islamic guerrillas. The warning was disseminated by the radio station of Israel's protégé, the South Lebanese Army, and by leaflets dropped from Israeli helicopters.

The deadline was later extended by two hours. At 5pm, according to one report, Israeli fighter-bombers began strafing the market town of Nabatiyah as helicopters went into action against vil-



lages in the vicinity. Shells were landing at the rate of three a minute.

"Thousands of cars packed with refugees took to the roads in a frenzied rush for safety, in scenes reminiscent of July 1993, when the Israelis killed 190 civilians in a week-long artillery blitz. The main coastal highway from Tyre and Sidon and to Beirut was

clogged with traffic heading north after the SLA radio warned "ports will be targets too".

"We don't know who will give us shelter or feed us. No one is left in our village," said the driver of a small van packed with 35 relatives.

"The situation is unbearable — air raids and shelling and threats. No one will protect my five children, so I decided to flee to Beirut," said a man, aged 55, from Ghadourieh in the deep south.

Beirut was attacked for the second day by helicopters which took off from a warship stationed offshore. They struck twice at a Syrian army position on the highway to Beirut airport, which was closed again for a while. The position is adjacent to the "southern suburbs" where Hizbullah holds sway but the choice of target was almost certainly intended to drive

# Class act Prescott casts aside his flat cap image

Gary Young

**P**ASS the guacamole and roll out the fumes — it's official. The MP who left school at 15 to train as a chef, worked for 10 years at sea and rose through the ranks of the trade union movement has finally come out of the closet.

"I was once [working class], but by being a member of Parliament, I can tell you, I'm pretty middle class," confessed John Prescott, deputy leader of the Labour Party, on Radio 4's Today programme yesterday.

And his leader, Tony Blair, acknowledged his new status as he thanked him for his contribution to the party's Staffordshire South East



John Prescott: from a chef to the pages of Tatler

by-election triumph. "I gather you are now a class act not a class warrior," he said.

Mr Prescott's admission came in response to the

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by the

industry. Here, Guardian writers look to the future, and why we may have to change what we eat and the way we eat it

# Idle farmers reap benefit of 'bizarre' EU subsidies

Paul Brown  
Environment Correspondent

HERE can be no other trade that guarantees an income for doing nothing — and pays so well whether or not you are good at your job.

That popular image of the modern farmer being feather-bedded by the taxpayer is true — except for the smallest farmers in the least favoured areas who most need the money.

Despite the current BSE problem, most farmers are laughing all the way to the bank thanks to the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy and the Government's handling of the economy.

As a result the price of farmland is soaring, and now fetches around £5,600 a hectare (2.5 acres) in East Anglia — £2,300 more than in 1992.

One of the many bizarre aspects of the subsidy system is that intensive farming, using most fertilisers and artificial aids to production, is being most highly rewarded. Farmers in most need of society's help to stay in business — those farming organically or hill farmers who also safeguard the countryside — are least likely to be generously treated. It is this aspect of the system that critics believe is behind the BSE crisis, offering as it does the temptation to use unnatural methods to boost production.

Hence organisations like the World Wide Fund for Nature are campaigning to have subsidies switched from production to care of the countryside, believing that by reverting to natural methods farmers will make food safer.

At present rich farmers with the largest incomes get the biggest subsidies, with some 80 per cent going to 20 per cent of the biggest farmers. An average farm in the east of Britain can get up to £100,000 a year from the taxpayer before selling anything.

This strange system springs from fears of shortages like those in Europe during the war, and the rationing after. The aim of the European Economic Community was to encourage food self-sufficiency.

The EEC therefore guaranteed prices for farmers' products even if there was a surplus or imports would be cheaper — with the result that every available piece of land was used and intensive methods grew.

Wheat, beef, butter and grain mountains resulted, the surpluses were off-loaded to Russia and elsewhere at a huge loss to the taxpayer. Reform of the policy became inevitable when the United States objected to its export markets being undercut by these massive subsidies.

The result was a 1992 reform which meant farmers were guaranteed a much lower price for their grain, but got a subsidy for each hectare of land planted. The subsidy was higher for crops in which the EU was not self-sufficient, so peas and beans attracted higher subsidies than grain.

In addition, where there was surplus of a particular crop a percentage of the land used to grow it was not planted at all. This was called set-aside, and farmers got paid for doing nothing with that land.

The exception was livestock, where payments per head of cattle or sheep were maintained — although a cap was put on the total payment per hectare in a vain attempt to stop overstocking.

Added to this, when Britain left the Exchange Rate Mechanism in September 1992 farm subsidies rose dramatically as sterling's 30 per cent devaluation meant subsidies (paid in ecu) rose by the same amount. At the same time global grain harvests were hit by adverse weather, demand increased and prices rose dramatically.

Farmers were then able to cash in on both higher subsidies and higher grain prices, yielding a double bonus. Instead of farm incomes falling 20 per cent as forecast in 1992, they rose 25 per cent.

There are a huge variety of current subsidies. Dairy cows attract an annual payment of £114.43 before any milk is sold — rising to £180



Cash crop... Harvesting in Nottinghamshire, where EU subsidies foster intensive methods and the Government fears taxpayers finding out what is really going on. PHOTOGRAPH BY DON MCPHERSON

## A farmer's life

Subsidies for livestock and growing crops, 1995

Crops	£ per hectare	Livestock	£ per head
Cereals	289.16	Cows	221.26
Oilseeds	456.76	Beef	227
Peas & beans	388.80	Sheep	227
Linseed	520.51		
Set aside	340.94		

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

In some areas, beef cattle get a subsidy of £83 a head; sheep get £21.26 a head, or up to £27 in less favourable areas.

But it is arable farmers who really do well: for growing wheat or barley they get an EU subsidy of £289.16 per hectare; for oilseeds such as rape they get £456.76, and for peas and beans, £388.80. The

highest payment, of £520.51, is for linseed.

All that is before the farmer sells the crop — because he or she pockets that money too. But if it cannot be sold, or the price falls below a certain level, the EU buys it anyway.

But let us not forget set-aside. The EU now wants 10 per cent of grain-growing

land left idle, so farmers who have 100 hectares for growing grain would be paid £24,224 for planting 90 hectares and £2,409 for not-planting the other 10.

The Government, farming organisations, and most of all the green lobby, all want reforms in this system. The Government fears a backlash from taxpayers if they find out what is really going on, and farmers genuinely do not like a system that rewards intensive methods rather than looking after the land.

The green lobby sees hope of change in the BSE crisis. WWF campaigner Gill Murray said: "The whole issue has brought into sharp focus the relationship between food and how it is produced."

British farmers are quite capable of producing wholesome and environmentally sustainable products. Agricultural policies must be changed to reflect this. Livestock policies must be reformed to promote quality not quantity.

## EU beef cash gamble

### Meat trade rejects Brussels buy-up and banks on home market revival

Barbie Duttler

THE British meat industry was reluctant to part with its beef yesterday, despite a European Commission offer to buy thousands of tonnes to cushion the market slump caused by BSE.

As figures were released showing an increase in beef sales, the Federation of Fresh Meat Wholesalers said it made no sense to sell top-quality beef into storage.

The EC has offered to buy 50,000 tonnes of European beef this month at £220 per 100 kilos. Only 140 tonnes have been offered by British meat traders, while Germany is selling some 4,000 tonnes.

The decision, which marked the opening of EU beef stores for the first time in two years, aims to reassure farmers they can still get a fair price for their beef even if the BSE scare causes the market to collapse.

But the low take-up rate by British farmers and processors indicates they hope the market will revive and provide a better return than the commission.

Figures released yesterday by the market information firm Nielsen showed beef sales rose in the Easter shopping week and were running at more than 6 per cent ahead of the previous week's levels. Peter Scott, general secretary of the Federation of

Fresh Meat Wholesalers, said the possibility of more than half the beef supplies being taken out of the system would leave the country short.

A spokesman for the National Farmers Union said it was astonishing and disappointing that the take-up from Britain is so low. The EU's beef management committee was yesterday also considering Britain's request for higher compensation payments for the slaughter of prime cattle. European Unity or Bye Bye Brussels?

Tory MPs Edwina Currie and Tony Marlow are the guests of Vincent Hanna in the third Guardian Live Wire debate on the Internet tomorrow night from 6pm-8pm. Log on to <http://www.guardian.co.uk> or send advance questions to [livewire@guardian.co.uk](mailto:livewire@guardian.co.uk)

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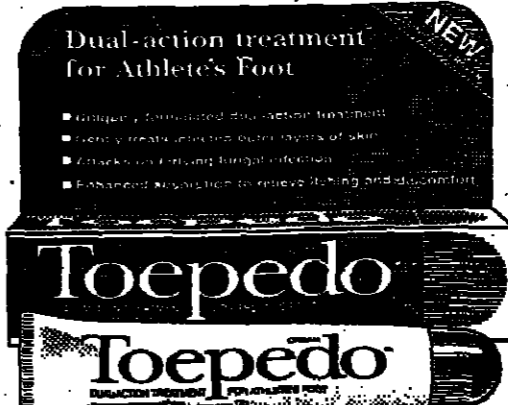
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Ten years on, the legacy of the reactor disaster at Chernobyl is still with us. **DAVID FAIRHALL** looks at the continuing dangers posed by crumbling Soviet-era power plants and, right, at the children paying the tragic price of the 1986 accident



Covered up... Volunteer 'liquidators' wore protective clothing to clean up the debris from the 1986 Chernobyl explosion, but two of the plant's reactors are still in service despite successive closure deadlines

# Deadly shadow hangs over Europe

TEN years after Chernobyl, 27 other power station reactors of the same Soviet design, or of an equally dubious vintage, are still threatening nuclear disaster.

A Western campaign to shut them down by political threats, financial bribes and humanitarian appeals has failed to secure a single closure. Next weekend's nuclear summit in Moscow of the G7 group of industrialised countries plus Russia, far from giving impetus to the closure campaign, is expected, in effect, to endorse its failure.

At Chernobyl, the scene of the April 1986 explosion, just a few miles north of the Ukrainian capital Kiev, the prospect is peculiarly bleak. Against all early expectations, two of the station's remaining RBMK reactors are still in operation, surrounded by miles of deserted, heavily contaminated countryside. Radioactive elements slowly leach into the ground water — and hence into Kiev's drinking supply — from more than 800 pits where the most dangerous debris was buried 10 years ago.

Here, as elsewhere, successive closure deadlines have passed with no locally acceptable economic alternative in sight. The latest promise, to close Chernobyl's Number 1 and 3 reactors in the year 2000, was made at an Ottawa conference last December. Many believe they will nevertheless run on until 2015. Meanwhile, the makeshift concrete "sarcophagus" protecting the melted ruins of the Number 4 reactor badly needs reinforcement. Building a new shroud will cost billions of dollars the Ukrainians do not have and the G7 countries show little sign of providing.

The past 10 years have seen a process of mutual disillusionment. Talk of closure has given way to a less aggressive policy of 'co-operation'.

There is also a suspicion that Western aid is being diverted into private bank accounts.

Some safety improvements funded through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) are quietly under way in Russia and Lithuania, which operates two RBMK Chernobyl-type reactors. But European firms have been warned by their lawyers that unless the Moscow summit produces concrete assurances on accident liability — which seems unlikely since Russia is still arguing with Ukraine and Belarus about who should pay for Chernobyl — they should beware of deeper involvement. They could be liable for compensation in the event of another disaster.

Three years ago, the Munich G7 summit called for all 15 RBMK reactors to be shut down. The summit's German hosts were particularly vociferous. They had, after all, closed five former East German, Soviet-designed VVER pressurised-water reactors after reunification, even though they could technically have been brought up to Western standards. But since Munich, even in environmentally sensitive Germany, talk of closure has given way to a less aggressive policy of "co-operation".

That too has produced few results. Take the Slovakian example. A deal had apparently been struck with French and German companies to upgrade and complete a pair of VVER-213 reactors at Mochovce, using \$1 billion (€820 million) of EBRD credit, in return for a promise to close two obsolete VVER-230s at Bohunice. But when the Slovaks looked at the sums, they calculated that electricity prices would have to rise by 25 per cent to pay for the scheme. Instead, they turned to the Russians for a much smaller \$100 million loan plus their technical assistance, and gave the engineering contracts to Slovakia.

Bulgaria produced another Western disappointment. French engineers were helping to upgrade the Kozloduy station, which has four 1960s-vintage VVER-230s. Under the terms of a European Union aid agreement, the Number 1 reactor pressure vessel should have been checked for embrittlement before restarting it last year. But with winter coming on, the Bulgarians said they could not wait. The French advisers pulled out in disgust.

One of the few reassuring



messages the International Atomic Energy Agency's experts are sending to the Moscow summit is that an exact repetition of the 1986 accident at Chernobyl is almost inconceivable. Everyone in the business now knows why it happened. Operating procedures have been tightened. Detailed physical modifications have been made (although the Ukrainian station, short of cash and isolated from Russia, is at the end of the queue for these) and the older RBMK reactors are only licensed for a year at a time.

However, after last week's International Atomic Energy Agency meeting in Vienna to consider the status of the graphite-moderated reactors, David Birkhoff warns that there was a residual risk of a multiple fuel channel blockage — in other words a more serious version of the incident at the St Petersburg reactor in 1992 — that could cause a large radioactive release.

There are 15 RBMKs, some dating from the 1960s, still operating in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania. Other nuclear power stations throughout eastern Europe use VVER pressurised-water reactors. Some of these were built in the 1960s; others were designed back in the 1980s for construction in Armenia, Bulgaria, Russia and Slovakia.

It is these primitive VVERs — a dozen of them — that Western experts believe are beyond piecemeal improvement and should be shut down, along with the RBMKs, immensely complicated machines that are extremely difficult to control. But immediate closure no longer seems

## Funds are sought for cancer battle

GERMANY'S environment and nuclear safety minister has appealed for funds to treat the 800 children with thyroid cancer from the areas most badly contaminated by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster 10 years ago.

Speaking after a conference in Vienna about the aftermath of the disaster, Angela Merkel said the amount needed to treat the affected children would be a relatively small total of €20,000, compared to the billions needed for the safe decommissioning of the Chernobyl power station.

The conference heard that many more cases are expected to appear among people in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia living downwind of the exploded reactor.

The final total among those aged three or less at the time is expected to be between 4,000 and 8,000. Not all those affected will die — probably one in 10 — but the survivors will require lifelong treatment.

The five-day conference — organised jointly by the European Commission, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organisation, was chaired by Ms Merkel.

It heard that the makeshift concrete "sarcophagus" protecting the burnt-out reactor Number 4 at Chernobyl contains 200 tonnes of mixed nuclear fuel and irradiated debris, mainly in the form of dust. This could go critical if it comes into contact with water, scattering fresh radioactivity over the immediate surroundings — although not to the scale of the contamination which resulted from the 1986 disaster itself.

This even reached Britain 1,000 miles away, as wind-blown radioactive dust was washed down by rain over western hills. A decade on, hundreds of square miles of sheep pasture in north Wales, Cumbria, central and south-western Scotland, are still contaminated and subject to restrictions. Three hundred thousand sheep are affected, and have to be checked for excessive radioactivity before they can be eaten.

In Vienna, the conference heard that while hundreds of thyroid cancer cases apparently caused by Chernobyl had been confirmed, the incidence of leukaemia was much less than expected. "The scientists have been surprised by this," said the IAEA's spokesman, David Kyd.

An extra 200 cases of leukaemia were forecast among the 200,000 "liquidators" who cleaned up after the 1986 explosion — but they have not yet appeared.

Scientists speculated that while young children were extremely vulnerable to radiation, healthy adults might be less vulnerable than was supposed.

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## Petty theft main threat

Pilfering — not terrorism — is fuelling fears about loose controls on nuclear material, reports Carol Williams in Moscow

WHEN curiosity got the better of three railway station workers in the Georgian port of Kutaisi last month, they broke open airtight containers that had languished for years at their depot.

Two days later, they were rushed to a hospital with radiation poisoning, having exposed themselves to nuclear waste — again reminding the world of doubts about the control of hazardous substances in the former Soviet Union.

Another radiation-emitting container was found in a manhole that same week in Izobilny, southern Russia. The incident rekindled worries in the nervous region neighbouring the Caucasus that Chechen separatists might seek to use such substances in retaliation for Russia's war in the republic.

Reactor fuel rods have been stolen from nuclear submarines of Russia's Northern Fleet at least twice. Police seizures of plutonium and enriched uranium around Europe suggest both go missing from Russian facilities at an alarming rate.

Nuclear agencies say Russia and its neighbours are less at risk of an organised attempt by terrorists or rogue governments to obtain nuclear weapons than they are vulnerable to petty theft by underpaid workers.

Atomic energy experts warn that colleagues now have the opportunity and incentive to cash in on what they believe is an international market in nuclear material.

The persistent security woes surrounding Russia's nuclear weapons and reactors are likely to be a key theme at this month's gathering in Moscow of the leaders of the Group of Seven countries, including the United States president, Bill Clinton.

But those involved in preparing for the nuclear security summit next Friday are expressing disappointment that it is shaping up to be less directed at enhancing security than at the re-election chances of Mr Clinton and Russia's president, Boris Yeltsin.

With the US congress increasingly reluctant to help pay to make Russia safer, the latter's poorly guarded plants and institutes are likely to remain attractive targets.

"There are 900kg (1,980lb) of plutonium at the Obninsk institute — in theory, this would be enough to produce 200 atomic weapons," says Igor Sutyagin, a nuclear security analyst in Moscow.

But Mr Sutyagin insists that, so far, the hazards are only theoretical. Most cases of theft involve uranium of a quality too low for weapons, and instances involving more dangerous materials showed that the thieves were unable to find a buyer.

Yuri Volodin of the nuclear safety authority, Gosatomnadzor, concedes that Russia must develop a reliable system for the control and accounting of its huge stockpiles of plutonium and enriched uranium, and improve security. But he acknowledges funding is unlikely to be found soon.

Mr Sutyagin fears that Russia's risk becoming tolerant of theft. "An environment can be created where theft is commonplace, acceptable."

A US report last month estimated that 1,400 metric tons of bomb-making substances are stored in the former Soviet Union. Stocks are growing because plants in Tomsk continue to produce plutonium.

"To shut down the main source of employment in a city of 100,000 is a tall order," says Yuri Yershov, a physicist. — Los Angeles Times.

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Cricket

As another season makes its comic-cuts start Mike Selvey despairs as the world sniggers at our establishment approach to the game

England sidles into the spring ritual

THE WAY the first-class season whimpers into life reveals much about the approach to cricket in this country. Worthies they may well be but, when the players of Oxford University and Leicestershire pull on their layers of sweaters and take the field at The Parks today, they will be enacting the English establishment's idea of the big kick-off. But while England re-enacts its annual spring ritual...

pathetic local crowds, rides on the back of revenue created from the national side. It is in the counties' own interest — and therefore their duty, however self-sacrificial it may be — to focus the bulk of their energies into the success of the national side. Against that are those who believe, as far as the England team is concerned, that the current structure is adequate, providing enough players of sufficient calibre, and that it is at the level beyond their direct control that things tend to go wrong. Yet, whatever the views of the respective counties and their memberships, there is probably not one so revolutionary that it would advocate releasing top players from their contracts and for the Test and County Cricket Board to place them under contract instead, turning the part-timers into international professionals. In this regard, as in so many other areas, we lag behind other countries. Last winter, before the series against England, the United Cricket Board of South Africa announced that with its top players contracted to them (no professional circuit there, remember) they retained the power to withdraw such players from provincial matches if they deemed it in the international interest. So Allan Donald, lacking rhythm at the start of the series, was told not to play for Orange Free State against the England tourists and instead spent time with coaches and physiologists working towards getting things right. Similarly Brian McMillan was withdrawn from an important Western Province match. The provinces comply with this as national success is paramount.

Much the same applies to the attitude over how South Africa's players spend the winter. So Shaun Pollock — young, enthusiastic and full of potential — has been encouraged to use the county game to hone his skills and his stamina while McMillan, at an age when he needs recovery time, was told to withdraw from a contract with Surrey. It is similar in Australia, where some players are criceted while others — Shane Warne, for example, or Craig McDermott — have been discouraged. Both countries recognise the paramount needs of the international side. The upshot is that the top players in these countries benefit from a continuity and intensity of approach to playing, coaching, training and treatment that is denied English cricketers. Instead England players are, in effect, on loan for the period of an international. Coaching time is limited, as is authority, and once back with the county outside influences effectively end. Raymond Illingworth recognised the need for some further control if the team was to progress and during the winter he asked the counties for players — similar to those exercised by the UCBAs — to insist that a player be rested from a county match if he felt it to England's advantage. Furthermore, he would have liked to have been able to say, perhaps, to Worcestershire that he would like Graeme Hick to bowl more overs of off-spin or to ask Middlesex to open the batting with Mark Ramprakash. But, although he insisted that it would not be a power he would abuse, it was predictable that the counties would turn him down. When the Aclife Committee eventually files its report into the structure surrounding the England team, there could well be a recommendation that a pool of top players be given large Test and County Cricket Board contracts so that, once under TCCB control, they can be hired to their counties — a reverse of the current situation. Such a progressive move must be in the best interests of the national side and the players, and, if that is the case, it should be in the interest of the counties as well. Yet the chances are minimal. Obstacles would be placed in the way, who would choose the players? The members will object. Why should we bring youngsters on only to lose them? The counties, as ever, are the board and a cosy state of self-interest remains.



Illingworth... turned down

In truth, at county level the game, if left untouched in other areas, would potter along as before, with Blyths the international turning out regularly for Leamshire unless his technique was shot and needed remedial treatment. And if he did not, then there would be a few who would notice in any case. But if there were change, county cricket would survive at the same bland level cherished by those who try to block progress. England cricket, on which the counties' existence depends, would, however, have taken a giant step towards real professionalism and, perhaps, to a successful world.

The cynics' chorus will be heard again as Oxford and Cambridge take on the counties. Will Kendall bats for the universities

The finest finishing school of all

THE start of the season today, with Oxford University facing Leicestershire, will no doubt bring a chorus of complaint that Oxbridge cricket no longer deserves a place on the first-class fixture list. Cynics argue that such privileges are simply the result of sentiment and tradition. They are missing the point. Today's student players do not need to hark back to the days of Cowdrey, May and Dexter to vindicate their position. Mike Atherton, John Crawley and Jason Gallian are more recent examples of Oxbridge's importance as the best cricket nursery in the country. The universities cannot pretend to compete at the same level as full-time professionals but this has been the case for many years. Rather, they recognise that the chance to become involved in first-class cricket is vital to Oxford and Cambridge students with serious aspirations in the game. The motto "If they're good enough, they're old enough" is observed on campus. If such a world existed, where counties never test promising youngsters until they have served an apprenticeship. At the universities, by contrast, players will be thrust into the limelight with an opportunity to make an impression and improve more rapidly from exposure to higher standards. Gregor MacMillan and Iain Sutcliffe are two to have benefited recently. Both now play championship cricket with



Seat of learning... Oxford play Northamptonshire at The Parks. Atherton, Crawley and Gallian are all Oxbridge alumni

est to send him back to the pavilion. They do, after all, sacrifice up to five days a week to cricket, while being under constant pressure from tutors to keep up with their studies. Without the incentives of professionalism, the universities find their resolve in a desire to make the fixtures worthwhile and to enjoy them. The full-time influence of such experienced coaches as Lenham has clearly been beneficial, and this year's Cambridge side can only benefit from the knowledge and enthusiasm of their new coach, Derek Randall. Improvement is significant: only last year Sutcliffe and Chinnay Gupta took part in an Oxford record opening

stand of 385 against Hampshire, and Andrew Whittall took 10 wickets for Cambridge against Essex. The basis for first-class cricket at Oxbridge is established and proven. If it is destroyed school leavers will be faced with the stark choice between first-class cricket and higher education. More often than not, given modern day expectations, cricket will come second. There is always room for improvement and moves are being made to strengthen Oxbridge squads still further through an admissions policy that is not suspicious of sportsmen. Gupta, the current Oxford captain, believes that the present squad is the best he

has seen in his six years here, and Cambridge are considerably more experienced than in recent times. Oxbridge cricket is flourishing and should not be made a scapegoat for the troubles elsewhere in the English game. Will Kendall, an undergraduate at Keble College, Oxford, was the university's secretary of cricket last year.

Amiss gives Botham backing

THE Warwickshire chief executive Dennis Amiss yesterday added his voice to those backing Ian Botham's elevation into the England set-up. The former England batsman joined Derbyshire and Northamptonshire officials, who have nominated Botham to be a selector. Amiss said: "I believe Botham has got to be included. Even if he wasn't able to be a selector, his sheer presence would be a huge benefit to the England players. "I've never seen an England team lacking so much confidence as the one at the end of the South Africa tour and in the World Cup. They are good players but need to have their confidence restored. We have got to get some young selectors who will bring fresh ideas — people who have not been so long out of the game. Robin Smith has pleaded with the chairman of selectors Ray Illingworth to be given an extended run in the problem No. 3 spot against India and Pakistan this summer. He said: "If I batted at three, then perhaps I would have the chance to go on and get the hundreds I'm looking for. The extra responsibility would do me good and I am ready for it." The Derbyshire fast bowler Devon Malcolm, who accused Illingworth of destroying his confidence on the tour of South Africa, has been told by the Test and County Cricket Board that no disciplinary action is to be taken against him for his comments in a newspaper article.

Ice Hockey

Clubs consider quick resolution

NEXT season could see sudden-death overtime and penalty shoot-outs to decide games tied at the end of regulation time if ideas being floated in Blackpool this weekend at a meeting organised by the British National Ice Hockey League are adopted. The meeting has been sanctioned by the British Ice Hockey Association and invitations have gone to all major clubs outside the six committed to September's professional Superleague. It was the advent of the Superleague which led to the replacement of the British League by the BNHL. Finance will be the yardstick to determine membership of both the Premier and First Divisions. Former clubs needing at least £140,000 and First Division members £75,000. The BNHL, the sport's governing body, has allowed the BNHL to run its own affairs and negotiate TV and sponsorship rights.

Sports Betting

Why some wagers are best left to the last minute

KEEP Betting Live! Like most entertainments, betting is best enjoyed live. Until recently that pleasure, or the stress that sports punters like to think of as pleasure, was reserved for those with sophisticated betting accounts. If one is happy to accept a high level of risk, the spread firms still offer the most interesting ways to bet "in the running", but most backers prefer the security of a fixed stake. Stan James, the innovative Oxfordshire-based independent, provide a fixed-odds alternative. For a while they have stayed open on Sunday nights to make prices on the final round of United States golf events covered live on satellite television. Tomorrow, of course, they will be open for Masters business. Recently the same firm introduced live betting for the first half of televised football matches and have now extended the service to cover virtually the whole game (up to the 80th minute). Soccer makes an excellent medium

Weekend fixtures

Table listing weekend fixtures for various leagues including FA Cup, Football League, and others.

Tomorrow

Table listing fixtures for tomorrow's matches across various leagues.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE

Table listing fixtures for the Bell's Scottish League.

RUGBY LEAGUE CUP FINAL WEMBLEY STADIUM Saturday 27th April

Long trip for Avro

سكنا من الامل



Racing

Long trip to pay off for Avro Anson

NORTHERN stables should make a presence felt on a top quality jumping card at Ascot today. The going was good at last week's fixture and Maurice Camacho, the Malton-based trainer, will be praying conditions stay the same for Avro Anson in the Letheby & Christopher Long Distance Hurdle.

Beaten a head by Sweet Glow in this race two years ago, Avro Anson has shown his best form on a sound surface, although there was some give underfoot when he won the 1994 Stayers' Hurdle at Cheltenham. He subsequently had first prize taken away from him in the stewards' room.

Johnson takes a gamble with Direct Route (2.35) by running him in the Ladbrokes Handicap Hurdle instead of the concluding novices' event in which he had raced. Off his light weight, Direct Route looks capable of a bold bid against more seasoned campaigners. Winner of three bumper races, the five-year-old finished a long way clear of the remainder when second to the unbeaten Penny A Day in a hotly contested novice hurdle at Kelso last time.

Cochrane stars with double

RAY COCHRANE continued his fine start to the Flat turf season with a 99-1 double at Brighton yesterday on Star Talent (10-1) and Bashful Brave (8-1).

Star Talent, who came from last to first in the fine two furlong race of the Hollingbury Limited Stakes, was welcomed in the winner's enclosure by trainer Gay Kelleway who said: "I went to the Newmarket sales with my father (Paul) who made me buy this one for 4,000 guineas although I didn't like

the look of him much. The horse had breathing troubles and has to be held off until the very last minute - just as Ray did today. "It also helps that we have a gallop at home at Whitcombe, which is a replica of Brighton and Epsom with a stiff uphill finish. "Star Talent is owned by my assistant trainer, Jo Crowley, and I had my first 'touch' in the ring here, getting 12-1 about him."

Ascot card with guide to the form

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 2.00 Bumper 10-11, 2.40 Bumper 10-11, 3.10 Avro Anson).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 2.00 KENTISH HORSE CHASE, 2.12 CALL IT A DAY, 2.15 JONAS).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 2.35 LADROBES HANDICAP HURDLE, 2.45 MURKIN HANDICAP HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 3.10 LETHEBY & CHRISTOPHER LONG DISTANCE HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 3.40 BIRMINGHAM HANDICAP CHASE).

Results

Table with 2 columns: Race number and results (e.g., 2.00 Bumper 10-11, 2.40 Bumper 10-11, 3.10 Avro Anson).



Love tangle... Warrington's Koko-Love is held by Moriarty in the early stages at Wilderspool

Super League: Warrington 16, Halifax Blue Sox 10

Wire survive screen test

Paul Fitzpatrick

TELEVISION evidence ruled out tries for Warrington at Wilderspool last night, but they still did enough to record their third Super League victory.

Points have been coming thick and fast in Super League but the pattern was very different on this surface and only eight were recorded before the interval. Harris landed two penalties for Warrington and Amone replied with a try for Halifax.

The Widnes official, Mr Cummings, twice called on the "second referee" before the interval, the first time after 25 minutes when Scullibeg threw a long ball out to the right and Forster aid in at the corner. It must have

been close but the ruling was no try. The second occasion came in the 28th minute after Halifax, on a rare visit to the Warrington 20-metre zone, worked the ball left via Moana and a clever flick on by Moriarty. Amone completed the move and the action replay confirmed the validity of the touch-down.

Rugby League

Broncos miss bus and selection

TONY CURRIE, the London Broncos' coach, yesterday dropped Leo Dynevor and Russell Bowden as a disciplinary measure, a courageous decision by a man who has already lost valued members of a limited squad to injury.

Kevin Skerrett, the Great Britain prop, will be in the Wigan squad for the match against Bradford at Wheldon Road but the club confirmed yesterday that they are prepared to release him. Warrington are favourites to sign the 28-year-old forward who, under the terms of his contract, would leave the club on a free transfer, as he left Bradford in 1990.

Warwick programme

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 1.30 Lady Grenville, 2.00 INSTITUTE HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 1.50 WARRICK HURDLE, 2.00 INSTITUTE HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 2.20 WARRICK OPEN HURDLE, 2.30 WARRICK HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 2.50 WARRICK CLASSIC STAKES, 3.00 WARRICK HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 3.20 WARRICK HURDLE, 3.30 WARRICK HURDLE).

Warwick programme

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 3.50 WARRICK HURDLE, 4.00 WARRICK HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 4.30 WARRICK HURDLE, 4.40 WARRICK HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 5.00 WARRICK CLASSIC STAKES, 5.10 WARRICK HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 5.30 WARRICK HURDLE, 5.40 WARRICK HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 6.00 WARRICK HURDLE, 6.10 WARRICK HURDLE).

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 6.30 WARRICK HURDLE, 6.40 WARRICK HURDLE).

Head start

THE Guinness trials at Ery yesterday failed to throw up any serious threats to ante-post favourites Borsam or Alhambra in the Newmarket Classics.

Table with 2 columns: Race name and odds (e.g., ASCOT WARRICK, N. ARBOT, SEDGFIELD, W. HAMPTON, IRISH).



Josef Fischer, above, was the first winner of the Paris-Roubaix across the muddy and dung-coated cobbles of northern France. The German took nine hours to cover the 175 miles and won £130. Tomorrow is the centenary of L'Enfer du Nord



Hell hath no fury... competitors receive uniform and bowler-hatted encouragement as they ride the cobbles in 1920, the second running of the race after a break during the war

# One hundred years since Hell began

## William Fotheringham on the heroes and heartbreaks of the Queen of Classics

**A**SPECTACULAR, bumpy and painful two-wheeled birthday will be celebrated in northern France tomorrow: it is 100 years since the first Paris-Roubaix, the Queen of Classics or, for the 200 participants, the Hell of the North. Heroes have been made

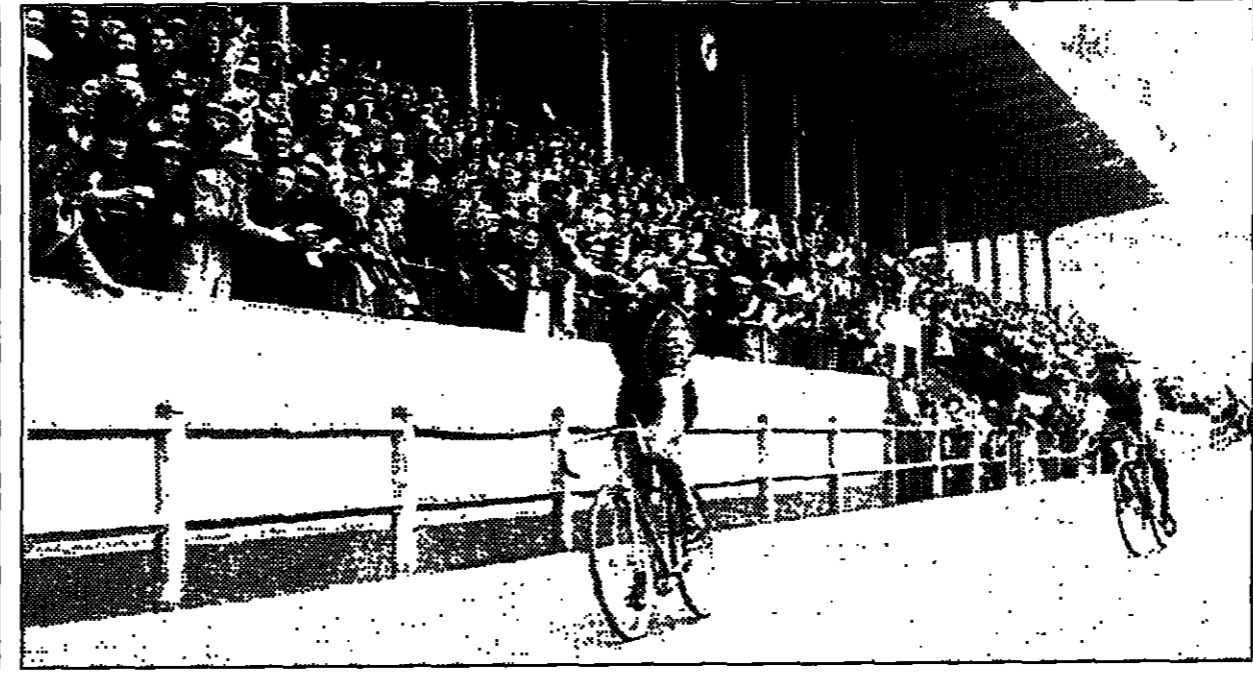
with gas-pipe tubes and balloon tyres. The track is now a white elephant and the cloth industry has been decimated by recession. Yet Paris-Roubaix has a timeless quality and a unique place in cycling. After the First World War shelling on the cobbled tracks the race became known as *L'Enfer du Nord* even though it was hell before that with 30 miles of *pointé*. The 1981 winner Bernard Hinault said: "I detest this stupid race."

The first race left Porte Maillot in Paris after a special mass to stone for the fact that it was Easter Sunday: the winner, Josef Fischer of Germany, took nine hours to cover the 175 miles and received 1,000 Fr. The race's reputation for meeting out ill-luck to favourites was made when the leader Arthur Linton of Wales was brought down by a stray dog. Linton was the first of many to curse the perversity of "La Pascale". In 1927, after a dead heat, the judge first declared France's Joseph Curtel the winner, then awarded victory, without photographic evidence, to another rider. Three years later the Frenchman Jean Marechal was disqualified from victory after he was accused of causing the rider placed second to crash: again there were no objective witnesses. Marechal always considered himself the moral winner, as did Roger Lapébie, disqualified four years

later for borrowing a spectator's bike after puncturing. So too did Romain Maes, who was given second despite being the clear winner according to the photo finish in 1936. In 1989 Italy's Franco Ballerini circled the Velodrome with his arms raised in a victory salute after the announcer stated he had won a close sprint with Gilbert Duclos-Lassalle of France. Only when he returned to collect his bouquet was he told of the mis-



The road to hell... Fischer, centre, in jacket and hat at the start of the 1896 race



Home from hell... Belgium's Rik Van Steenberghe celebrates his victory in 1948 on the track at Roubaix

## Sedgefield (N.H.) runners and riders

Table of race results for Sedgefield (N.H.) including various horse races and riders.

## Newton Abbot (N.H.)

Table of race results for Newton Abbot (N.H.) including various horse races and riders.

## Wolverhampton all-weather card tonight

Table of race results for Wolverhampton all-weather card including various horse races and riders.

## Sport in brief

### British sailors poised

**B**EN AINSLIE scored an encouraging victory in the Laser world sailing championship in Falmouth, yesterday. Simonstown, yesterday. He led the fourth race in South Africa from start to finish but, having finished 19th in the third, he dropped to third overall. In Falmouth, in the other half of the 135-boat fleet, he has been his fourth race after finishing third in the third and the two Britons will be well placed when they discard their worst results, each having won two races. For the second successive day conditions were difficult, with huge seas running from the south but winds of only 15-20 knots. At times the wind shifted violently and one shift enabled the defending champion Robert Scheidt of Brazil to claw back seven places on the final leg of the fourth race to finish second behind Percy Karl Suneson (Sweden) heads the points table after four races but has yet to win one.

## Cricket

Aamir Sohail scored 105 from 127 balls and Mushtaq Ahmed took four key wickets as Pakistan beat India by 38 runs in the opening match of the Sharjah Cup yesterday. Pakistan raced to 271 for five in their 50 overs and then bowled out India for 233.

## Rugby League

The Widnes forward Andy Collier, sent off for a high tackle during his side's 46-14 defeat at Salford, has been banned for two matches and fined £75 by the RFL disciplinary committee, as has the Dewsbury prop Shayne Williams for the same offence in a 6-6 draw with Batley. The Leigh scrum-half Chris Wilkinson, given his marching orders against Swinton for kicking and stamping, received a two-match ban and a £50 fine.

## Judo

When Kate Howey competes in the British Open in Birmingham today she will be the only member of the host's national team taking part; the others have left for Japan to prepare for next month's European Championships. Howey, who felt she needed international competition before the Europeans, flies to join them tomorrow.

## Basketball

The International Federation has rejected an appeal by Barcelona against the refereeing in the European club championship final which they lost 67-56 to Panathinaikos.

## Motorcycling

Carl Fogarty begins the defence of his world superbike championship in the San Marino round at Misano, Italy, tomorrow. The Lancastrian has joined the New Zealander Aaron Slight in the Castrol Honda team after winning the title on a Ducati last season.

Large advertisement for 'goal' football boots, featuring a soccer player and the text 'this month in goal' and 'KING KLINSMANN'.

صوتنا من الاعمال

صوتنا من الامل

# Newcastle must push their luck

Martin Thorpe

**K**EVIN KEEGAN's dream headlines tonight would be: "Southampton rock United" and "Injured Cantona to miss title run-in". But then, knowing Newcastle's recent luck, they would probably go and lose at home to Aston Villa tomorrow.

Neither Saints, nor the proposed erection of a 60ft spire at nearby Gateshead, look capable of coming to Keegan's aid against the malevolent forces which seem to have gripped the club and mockingly turn their title hopes to pieces.

## The crunch

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY		
Apr 13	Man City	away
Apr 17	Chelsea	home
Apr 27	Everton	home
May 5	West Ham	away
WIMBLEDON		
Apr 13	Middlesbrough	away
Apr 17	Blackburn	away
Apr 27	Coventry	home
May 5	Southampton	away
MANCHESTER CITY		
Apr 13	Sheff Wed	home
Apr 27	Aston Villa	away
May 5	Liverpool	home
SOUTHAMPTON		
Apr 13	Man Utd	home
Apr 17	Newcastle	away
Apr 27	Bolton	home
May 5	Wimbledon	away
QUEENS PARK RANGERS		
Apr 13	Coventry	away
Apr 17	West Ham	home
May 5	Nottm Forest	away
COVENTRY		
Apr 13	QPR	home
Apr 17	Nottm Forest	away
Apr 27	Wimbledon	away
May 5	Leeds	home
BOLTON		
Apr 13	West Ham	away
Apr 27	Southampton	home
May 5	Arsenal	away

Heaney. But there should be a reason for the fit-again Venson, one of five players with Newcastle links in the Saints squad, all no doubt trying to rescue the post-Fenton reputation of exiled Geordies.

"I won't give up until it's mathematically impossible and won't allow the players to do so either," said Keegan. "We must believe United will slip up somewhere."

So tight are things at the bottom that, if Manchester City win at home to Sheffield Wednesday today, their perilous position could look a dodgy one. "My players are prepared mentally and physically and I believe in my own ability," said Alan Ball.



Well-suited... Reid is led from the Wembley pitch by Kendall after Everton failed to stop Liverpool's double in 1986, losing 3-1

# Kendall and Reid meet again on a rising tide of fortune

Cynthia Bateman on the progress being made at Sheffield United and Sunderland

**S**IMPLY Red and White, the group whose record cheer up Peter Reid is at No. 41 in the charts, are hoping it will soon be in the top 20. Reid is hoping to be in a top 50 himself, and with only six points from a possible 15 needed to secure promotion to the Premiership, he should not need much cheering up.

Reid, who had a short spell in Greek football, returned to a disastrous 75-day stay at Notts County last season before re-organising his life and taking over the Blades from Dave Bassett in December.

This month in... **goal** THE FOOTBALL MONTHLY

REVEALED: **goal**

**JÜRGEN KLINSMANN**  
His first major interview since leaving Tottenham

**FOWLER & McMANAMAN**  
On rucking with Ruddock, joining Everton, and the "Frankie Vaughan" channel

**PLUS FREE**  
PHOTO SUPPLEMENT  
The 50 greatest football photos of all time chosen by Britain's top sports photographers

**ON SALE NOW**

# Tranmere promote Aldridge

**T**HE VETERAN striker John Aldridge yesterday announced that he has accepted responsibility for preserving Tranmere Rovers' First Division status when he was unexpectedly installed as the new manager.

# TEAM SHEET

Team	Manager	Key Players
Chelsea v Leeds	Glen Hoddle	Lee Young, Steve Bruce, Frank Lampard
Coventry v QPR	Richard Flitcroft	Richard Flitcroft, Steve Bruce, Phil Woosnam
Man City v Sheff Wed	Alan Ball	Alan Ball, Tony Adams, Steve Bruce
Middlesbrough v Wimbledon	Jan Peeters	Jan Peeters, Steve Bruce, Phil Woosnam
Nottm Forest v Blackburn	Wynne Jones	Wynne Jones, Steve Bruce, Phil Woosnam

# Celtic's 10-year reminder that it's not over till it's over

**T**OMMY BURNS, the Celtic manager, has been giving his players a daily reminder of the day in 1986 when the Celtic team he played for won the title with just minutes of the season remaining.

# Final tickets 'given away' by McCarthy

**T**HE Republic of Ireland manager Mick McCarthy, handed by the Football Association with receiving Cup final tickets for 10 years, claimed yesterday that he was an innocent victim of last season's scandal.

# Death dues charged to Collymore

Soccer Diary

Martin Thorpe

**K**EVIN KEEGAN maybe as sick as a parrot but one Newcastle supporter has written to Stan Collymore blaming him for killing his budget. "He owes me big time," says Dominic Bourd.

The feathers first flew in injury time of the recent clash between Liverpool and Newcastle. Dominic and his friend Peter Phillips were watching the game in the living room and, when Collymore scored Liverpool's winner, they kicked out in frustration and accidentally knocked the budget's cage off its stand.

**O**KAY, Graham Fenton's Newcastle-draft mother and sister were in the Woodway Park crowd last Monday wearing black and white scarves, and Fenton scored the two late goals for Blackburn that effectively scuppered Newcastle's title hopes.

# Huddersfield sack striker on drugs ban

**H**UDDERSFIELD yesterday sacked their 25-year-old striker Craig Whittington following his ban by the Football Association from all activities connected with the game until November 1. He was found guilty of misconduct after two separate dope tests showed traces of cannabis.

# A N Other

**L**OOKING at the old video clips now it is a source of amazement that the outstanding left foot of this amiable Yorkshireman was apt to be taken for granted when it was not being overlooked. For 14 years he faithfully plied his craft under a clock, winning 17 goals with a strained groin, according to the manager Walter Smith, and the defender Gordon Petric appears to have little chance of playing because of a poisoned arm.

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icket  
lughy League  
Judo  
Bank of Hall  
Mutual cycling

# SportsGuardian

## THE MASTERS: SHERRY, TORRANCE AND LYLE FAIL TO MAKE THE CUT



The first cut is the deepest... Gordon Sherry at the 2nd hole yesterday on his way to scoring 77, a total of 155 bringing a premature end to his first Masters. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID CANNON

# Floundering Scots on the rocks

David Davies sees some illustrious names make an early exit at Augusta

THE high hopes entertained by the tallest player in modern golf, Gordon Sherry, plummeted yesterday in the second round. The 6ft 8in Scot completed his amateur career with a round of 77 to go with his opening 78, to miss the cut by a wide margin and said, on leaving the course: "I am now a professional."

Bob teaches Sherry, also missed the cut, after a 71 for 151, and the 1998 Masters champion Sandy Lyle joined the Scottish exodus with a 74 for 149. Costantino Rocca, one of nine European Ryder Cuppers playing, had a 75 for 153 but Bernhard Langer, despite missing a putt of only 18 inches at the short 4th, got round in 70 and, on 145, and with the cut looking likely to be one or two over par, should survive.

Sherry, whose ambition when he came here was to match Peter McEvoy's record as the only British amateur to make the cut, said: "That was my worst experience on a golf course. I haven't had scores like those for four years or more."

"I played better than the scores suggest but the greens here put the fear of death into you. Maybe, though, it'll stand me in good stead in the long term. I'll be back and I'll manage the course better next time."

Sherry fell into a simple trap, common to many first-timers, of going for the pins. As a tactic this is like a motorway, fine if it works, but exceedingly dangerous when it does not and Sherry was always struggling after missing five of his first six greens and being five over.

Other notables likely to miss the cut included the US PGA champion Steve Elkington (153), the defending champion Ben Crenshaw (151) and the American amateur champion Tiger Woods (150). The pre-tournament favourite Fred Couples, who had a disastrous 78 in the first round, was 10 shots better yesterday and his total of 146 left him sweating on where the cut's edge would drop.

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**Augusta National**

Card of the course

Hole	Yds	Par	Hole	Yds	Par
1	424	4	10	485	4
2	555	5	11	458	4
3	380	4	12	155	3
4	295	3	13	485	5
5	436	4	14	405	4
6	180	3	15	500	5
7	380	4	16	170	3
8	535	5	17	400	4
9	435	4	18	405	4
Out	285	30	In	240	26

**6,925yds, Par 72**

**Stefan Popovich was not the only victim of last weekend's moment of evil. An entire community has had to watch its efforts to break free from a sleazy, fear-ridden reputation take another battering.**

## The back end of a quandary for Venables



David Lacey

IT IS safe to assume that when Terry Venables announces on Tuesday the England squad for the friendly against Croatia at Wembley on Wednesday week the principal point of discussion will concern the chances of Robbie Fowler starting his first international, having appeared briefly as a substitute last time.

There should be. Few teams have ever won anything of significance without a sound defence backed by solid goal-keeping. David Seaman should give Venables the latter in June but nine clean sheets in 15 friendlies have tended to obscure uncertainties at the back which may yet arise, to England's cost.

As yet Fowler can barely have an inkling of what international football is about. He did, however, get a hint after coming on for the last 13 minutes against Bulgaria.

WHILE outstanding attacking football has contributed to the recent excitement in the Premiership, cheap goals have helped as well. In Euro '96 the price of goals will increase, along with the cost of defensive errors.

**Outlook page 15**

صوتنا من الاعمال

**Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,626**

A copy of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,626, P.O. Box 315, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2AX, by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday, April 22.

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**Set by Araucaria**

**Across**

- 1 Islands where there's talk of lambs eating meat (7)
- 5 Word, not English, as entered, whence one may take umbrage (7)
- 9 Study of social behaviour — why the squint? (4,11)
- 10 Track — 's not very good (5)
- 11 Weaver and spinner (called Jim) takes in one thousand (4,5)
- 12 Suitable for a jar, making bed trouble with (Gher (9)
- 14 First musicians at Hastings (5)
- 15 West Indian theatre company backed to appear on screen (5)

**Down**

- 1 Confounded birds are whens flowers should be (7)
- 2 Dauphin gives Henry tennis balls, for instance (8,7)
- 3 Devices (say) person making one mark or other (9)

**CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,626**

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Blair  
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bride  
of Bill

PAUL F  
London R

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Other Lives 15 Interview 17 Arts 18 Context 19 Money 21

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# TheGuardian Outlook

### Tony Blair's US visit has turned into Bill and Tony's excellent adventure as they talked like twins separated at birth. R WAPPLE witnessed their Washington nuptials

## Blair is the bride of Bill

IT IS one of the harsh realities of what was once called the "special relationship", that British political figures put less of a swathe in the United States than American grandees, especially presidents, do in Britain.

Only Margaret Thatcher among post-Churchillian prime ministers, with her outside personality and unwavering self-assurance, has achieved anything approaching real celebrity in the States. Not one American in a hundred, I would wager, could name any of John Major's ministers, and two out of three of my compatriots could probably not even name John Major if asked to identify the present prime minister.

His three-day romp through New York and Washington this week is any indication, Tony Blair could change that in a hurry. Not that he himself came with any mistaken assumption that people would be swooning over him in the streets.

"I had a vision when I sat down on one of your television shows," he told a gathering of Washington's near-great and near-good at Lutyens' magnificent pile of an embassy on Thursday evening. Just a few minutes after he learned of Labour's victory in the Trans-worth byelection. "I thought the interviewer would ask me: 'When does the film come out, then?' That's what's expected of British visitors." General Colin Powell, one of those on hand, loved it, and so did the other guests, the other ambassadorial, the deterioration of the situation in Ulster, and the Royal divorce. That and mad cow disease, which provided almost as many jokes as Bill Clinton's roving eye at this year's Clinton dinner, the annual insiders gathering where reporters pretend to love politicians and vice versa.

Of course, the East Coast Establishment - politicians, financiers, big-time lawyers, publicists, academics - has always had a bad case of Anglophilia, and that hasn't changed a bit. Its reaction is not necessarily that of Middle

America, but my guess is that, in this case, the two groups will tend to agree. Americans of all descriptions love the young, the fresh, the winsome, and at 42 Tony Blair supplies all that and more. Add to that the fact that he looks like a winner, proclaimed by no less august an authority than Tina Brown's New Yorker to be "The Next Prime Minister", and you have an almost perfect package for Yankee consumption. People magazine, People's answer to the New Yorker, gave Blair four pages and a dozen pictures and celebrated his fondness for rock music and the fabled New York toy emporium, FAO Schwarz. Just the right kind of crowd-pleasing stuff.

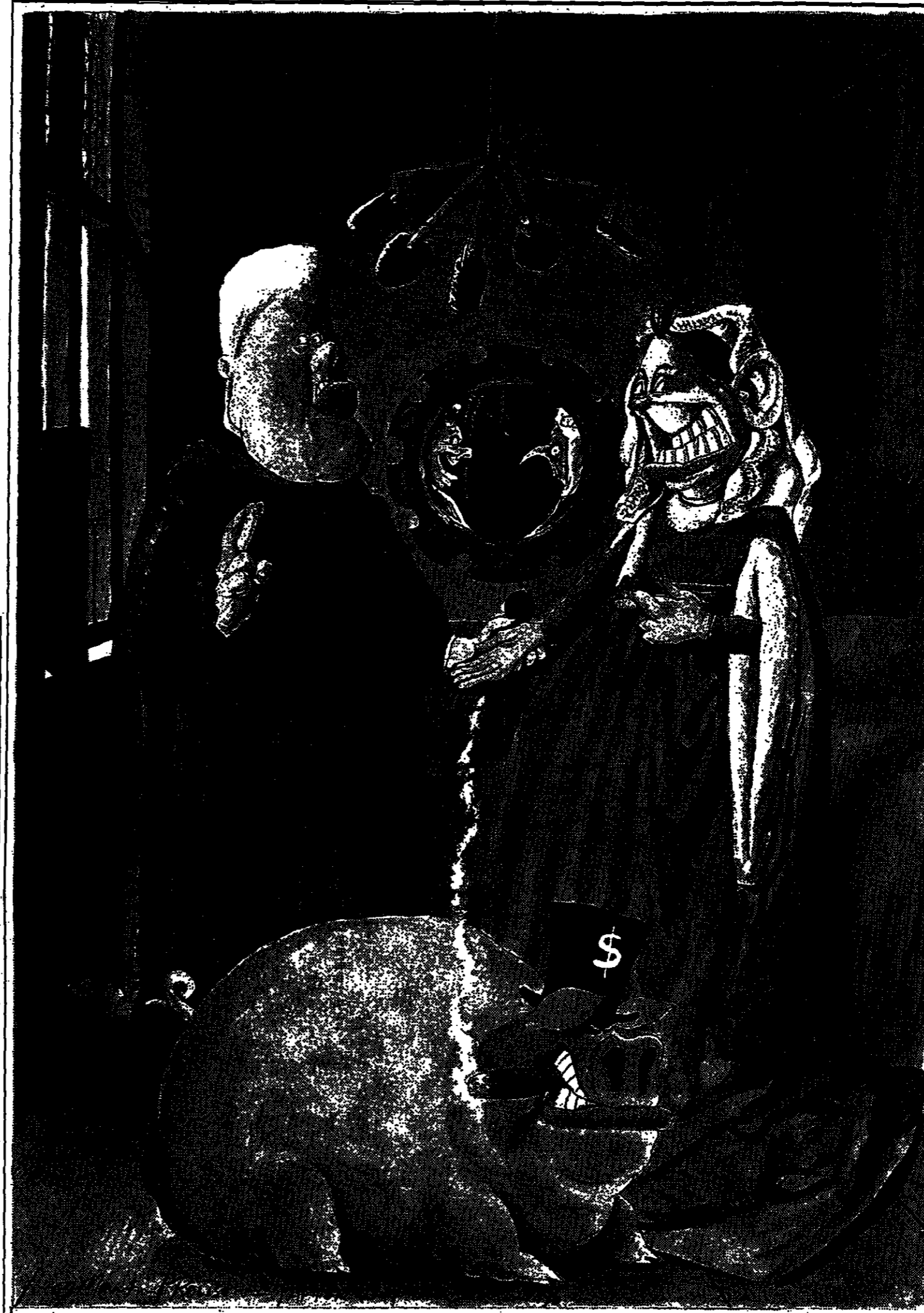
Blair has received plenty of national exposure, and not just in the magazines. Both the Washington Post and my own newspaper, the New York Times, ran substantial articles heralding the visit, which is unusual; kings and prime ministers come through Washington all the time without rousing a line of type, and leaders of the opposition are usually considered about as newsworthy as tax accountants.

In addition, there were television appearances, a well-attended news conference at the National Press Club, chats with editorial boards and meetings with Vice-President Gore and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, George Soros and the avuncular Ian Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Only Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich, the Republican leaders on Capitol Hill, turned cold shoulders, just as Ronald Reagan did when Neil Kinross visited in 1987. Bill Clinton and his consort, Hillary, clearly have found soulmates, he in his fellow Oxonian, she in Blair's wife, Cherie Booth, a colleague in the law.

Hillary showed up at a reception given for the Labour leader by Sidney Blumenthal, author of the adoring New Yorker piece, who gained a measure of infamy among his peers for the equally adoring pieces he wrote about Clinton four years ago.

The President, meanwhile, welcomed Blair to the White House with the kind of exuberance (and the attendant flood of words) that he seldom lavishes on overseas guests. The assumption in Washington is that Clinton is going to



beat Bob Dole in the autumn (which may not be very prudent: four years ago, George Bush was as far ahead of Clinton as Clinton is ahead of Bob Dole now). If this proves correct, and Labour also wins in Britain, Blair and Clinton seem likely to form a partnership as sturdy as the one that linked Mrs Thatcher and her pal Ron. Certainly, that is the expectation in the White House. The two hit it off famously last November, when the President stopped in London on his way to Ireland. An American who was in the room said they talked "like twins separated at birth" about what

Blair called during his time here "the voyage of change" that all left-of-centre parties have endured recently. Clinton was ready for a European buddy. He and Helmut Kohl share a passion for food in bulk, but not a lot more; he and John Major are cut from entirely different bolts of cloth. The Tories' doomed effort to help re-elect George Bush by rummaging through House Office files for material that would demonstrate the young Bill Clinton's lack of patriotism while at Oxford during the Vietnam War still rankles, but it is not at the centre of either the President's lack of

enthusiasm for Major or his attraction to Blair. On the most basic level, one of Clinton's closest advisers says, he finds Major dull and Blair interesting. Major conventional and Blair intellectually adventurous. But beyond that, there is the voyage. The Democrats have not been out of power as long as Labour has - Jimmy Carter was just taking office as Jim Callaghan was leaving - but by the end of the 1980s, they seemed equally out of steam. Michael Dukakis and Neil Kinross both came to be seen as the last gasp of the aggressive, all-devouring welfare state.

Only in such a situation, some would argue, could people as young and as little known as Blair and Clinton come to the fore. Both have jettisoned a good deal of their parties' ideological baggage, especially their commitment to big government, though Clinton has zigged and zagged more in repudiating much of the New Deal and the Great Society than Blair has done in de-emphasising socialisation and the lot of trade unions. Both have set out to recapture blue-collar voters, once the backbone of their parties, who were lured away by Thatcher in Britain and by Reagan in the US.

New Democrat, New Labour, both seeking ways to keep government viable as a social force in a day of widespread worship of the untrammelled marketplace. Enjoining workers to enter into a covenant with the government, Blair says, "We will help construct a community that is worth living in, but in return you've got to take the chance given to you. Opportunity and responsibility go together." To American ears, the words - if not the accent - sound Clintonian. If you set aside the doubts about Clinton's morality, which are deeply felt in the

United States, however beside the point they may seem to Europeans, the overriding question about both men is whether they really stand for anything. Both are accused by their opponents and by some more dispassionate observers of singing right-wing songs to conceal left-wing hearts. I was struck by Tony Benn's assertion that both of them are "far more concerned about the next election than the next generation", which reminded me how bad Benn and his American counterparts were at winning elections and thereby gaining the power they craved to help the future generations.

Blair did his best to put doubts to rest, telling Americans what they surely most wanted to hear: that the US and Britain needed to work in tandem, not only in Bosnia but also in Northern Ireland, that Britain must not make a false choice between Europe and America but must embrace both, that neo-isolationism is as much a danger in Britain as in the US, that Labour wanted not to run companies but to help them succeed.

Pat Buchanan would have hated it, but then Pat Buchanan wasn't invited to any of the parties. On matters economic, Blair made a special effort, paying more attention to the issues than to union big shots, Wall Street, which considered some of his predecessors unsound if not downright loony, was for the most part reassured. After a breakfast meeting sponsored by Henry Kissinger, Felix Ro-

### Clinton finds Major dull and Blair interesting - Major tediously conventional and Blair adventurous

haytn, the philosophically inclined head of Leuzard Freres, said he had been impressed. "He struck me," Rohtayn said, "as a modern politician very conversant with modern capitalism, its problems and the lack of obvious solutions."

The only really negative comment I heard from those who met Blair this week was the suggestion that he was perhaps too silky by half. Not very surprisingly, it came mostly from people who tend to call the President "Slick Willy". Those more favourably disposed to the President put the matter more obliquely. "A little lacking in gravitas," said a megaplanner. "Like the young John Kennedy - but he's smarter than Kennedy was, I think."

Whether Clinton's and Blair's electoral fortunes are closely linked, as was widely suggested this week on both sides of the Atlantic, seems questionable. It is argued that if American voters are prepared to accept the 72-year-old Dole, who offers diligence and experience in place of innovation and excitement, British voters will be more inclined to stick with an old hand, too.

In fact the two countries have often produced a certain political parallelism: in addition to Reagan and Thatcher, think back to Harold Wilson and Lyndon Johnson, both elected in landslides in 1964, both domestic innovators, both devout and politically adept. But if polls are to be believed, Major and his lot are much less popular than Dole and his party; remember, the Republicans won a massive victory in the Congressional elections less than 18 months ago, and despite Newt Gingrich's missteps, much of their agenda still strikes a resonant chord with the voters.

## PAUL FOOT suggests you arm yourself with the London Review of Books



'Governments on both sides of the Atlantic were curiously tolerant of these breaches of their own embargoes. In Britain, the arms industry smuggled up to Government and the Intelligence Services. At the Ministry of Defence it was hard to tell the difference between a civil servant and a merchant of death.'

Paul Foot writing on the arms trade in the LRB

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# A radical party to behold

WE HAVE been frequently reminded in the last few weeks that Tamworth, the principal town of Staffordshire South-East, was the birthplace of modern Conservatism. This morning, with a Labour MP now representing Sir Robert Peel's constituency, it looks more like its graveyard. In the mid-term of a Parliament it might just be possible to shrug off losing a seat to the Opposition on a swing of 23 per cent. But this Government is now in its fifth and final year in office. At this stage in its life-cycle a swing of 22 per cent begins to look terminal. At the same stage in the last Parliament, the Conservatives lost a by-election to Labour, but the swing in Monmouth was only 13 per cent. To come back from a swing of 22 per cent in just over a year would be almost like rising from the dead.

Of course, stranger electoral things have happened — though not many. The comeback that the Conservative Party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, has so often declared to be imminent could yet materialise. All one can say is that there was no sign of it at Staffordshire South-

East on Thursday. The Tories are still near the bottom of the hole which they dug for themselves when sterling collapsed in 1992. Granted that by-elections usually exaggerate the unpopularity of the Government and that this one may be no exception, on the latest Guardian-ICM adjusted poll, one would still have expected a swing of "only" 11 per cent to Labour. Even on the average of the latest unadjusted polls one would have expected no more than 19 per cent. What pushed the swing up to 22 per cent in Staffordshire was not so much the increase in the Labour vote as the collapse in the Conservative vote. For every 100 who voted Tory in 1992, only 40 voted Tory this week.

But the biggest political difference between the situation when Labour won Monmouth in May 1991 and the situation now is the credibility of Tony Blair. The precondition for the Conservatives to stage an effective comeback is for Mr Blair to be forced into a retreat and he seems currently in no mood to do that. The Labour leader told the British-American Chamber of Commerce this week that "success comes only for those who are constantly upgrading performance". He seems more than happy to apply this maxim to his own party and his own performance as party leader. He is constantly looking for new allies in his quest for power. Yesterday it was President Clinton. Earlier this week it was that demon of the currency market, George Soros. Last Sunday it was God, whom he enlisted as his inspiration if not his ally in an Easter interview with the Sunday Telegraph. Last year he flew out to Hayman Island in Australia to address the

assembled ranks of Newscorp executives and the demon of the tabloid press, Rupert Murdoch. Each new ally represents a new reassurance and neutralises — at least for a while — another potential enemy. Clearly Mr Blair is not going to allow himself to suffer character assassination at the hands of the Sun ruck if he can avoid it. There will be no Nightmare on Blair Street this time. He is not going to be denounced from every pulpit as a Godless socialist. He is not going to see the pound plunge on the foreign exchanges at the very prospect of a Blair government. He is not going to be cold-shouldered in Washington or suffer Neil Kinnock's fate of being destabilised by the White House press corps.

This is what must depress Dr Mawhinney far more than the result of the Staffordshire by-election. Every possible angle through which a Labour leader might be vulnerable, through the tabloid press, through the foreign exchanges, through morality, through the Church, through inexperience in foreign affairs, is being systematically closed down. On his American trip Mr Blair has become clearer than ever both about the price he is willing to pay for success and about the direction in which he intends to take his party and, assuming victory, his government. Labour is no longer a party of the left, he told Americans. New Labour will be a government of the radical centre. It will set about the job of changing Britain "from an explicitly centre-ground position, taking people with us and recognising that unless we combine change with equity, change will not come". Warm words, but ones that many in his party will find difficult to swallow.

# Don't mention 'adult' mags

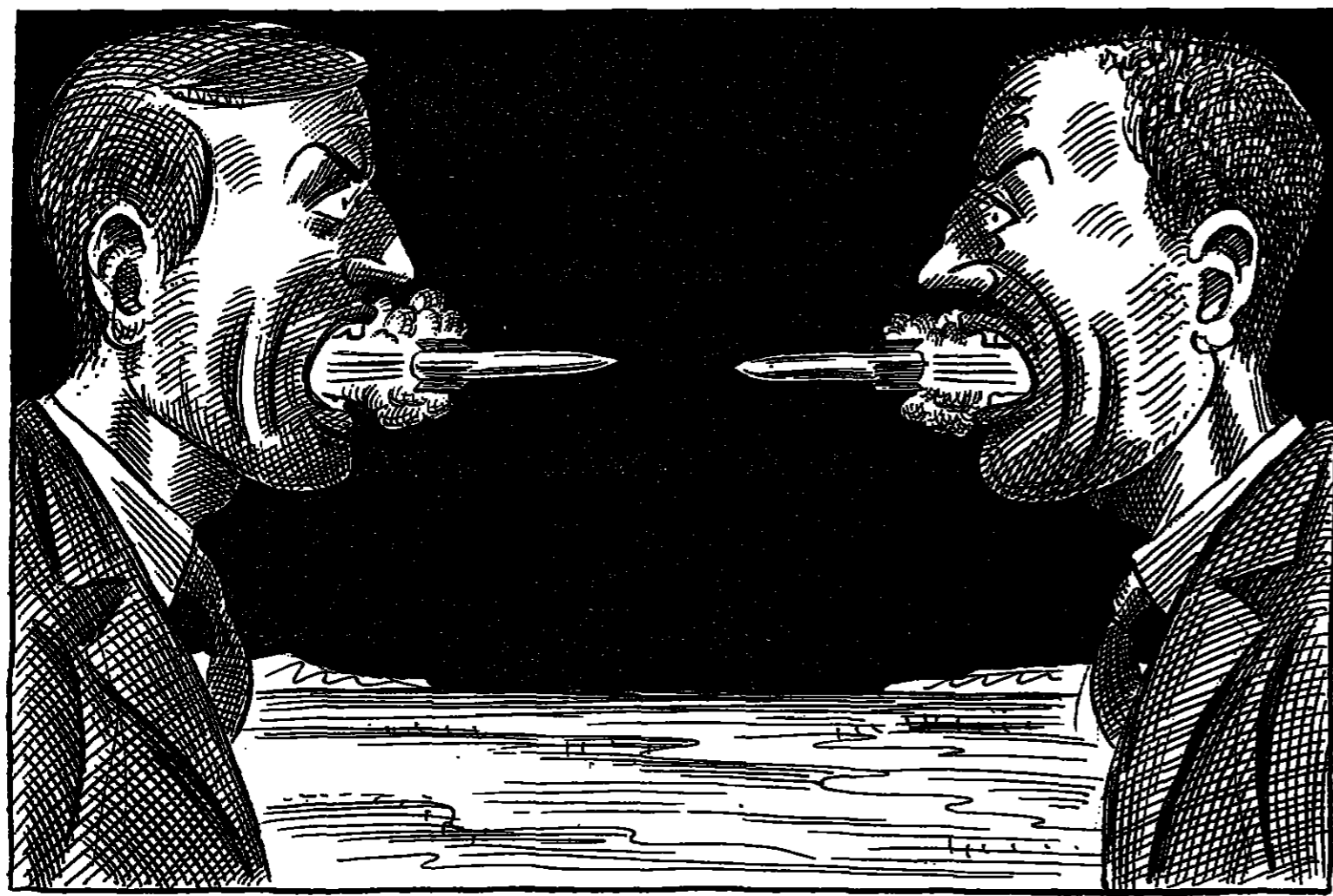
Where did you buy your copy of the Guardian this morning? From a newsagent, is the most likely reply. Today being Saturday, however, an increasing number of readers — 9 per cent, compared to 7.5 per cent a year ago — buy their paper not at the corner newsagents, but at a supermarket or a petrol station. Various explanations suggest themselves: the transformation of food and fuel retailers into purveyors of everything and anything; the introduction of the dreaded bar code to the front page, now something of a design feature in its own right; and the decline of the newsagent.

Newsagents can be tired, dispiriting places. Confectionery, tobacco, newspapers, magazines, and Lottery tickets compete for attention. And up there, on the top shelf, sit the great unmentionables of British high street retailing, the "adult" magazines. Unmentionable, that is, until this week. WH Smith, which shares 75 per cent of newspaper and magazine distribution with John Menzies, had operated a "box-out" policy for its 20,000 newsagent clients. A pre-packed selection of items was sent to the newsagents, who could refuse the titles they did not wish to stock. That was the theory. In practice, many complained that their requests were ignored, and they would be stuck with unwanted pornography. Hence, in part, the unsettling nature of shopping in many newsagents.

Loiter for too long by the magazines and you start to feel furtive. No matter that you really are only interested in the motorcycling magazines on the top shelf, the grubbiness of the adult titles is infectious.

The solution is simple. Put the sex magazines in the sex shops. This is not censorship. It is simply to remove material that some people may find offensive to a place where it would be impossible to stumble upon it by accident. Smith's decision to reverse the procedure, making it an "opt in" system, will go some way toward removing unwanted magazines in "family" stores.

It is an odd episode, coming only a month after WH Smith began to withdraw some 350 small, and therefore uncommercial, magazines from its retail outlets on the basis that its customers were "looking for mainstream products". Do adult magazines fit the definition of mainstream? The market for pornographic magazines has risen by 10 per cent in the last year; Smith's profits fell by 7.6 per cent last year, and the company has shed 1,000 jobs. In many European countries, such a move is illegal: commercial viability is no justification for refusing to stock a magazine. WH Smith says it has an obligation to balance "commercial and moral obligations". If this means an uninterrupted diet of glossy magazines of one type on the lower shelves and glossy magazines of a distinctly different nature on the top shelf, it is a short-sighted approach. Without the margins, the mainstream stagnates. Why not free up some space on the top shelf for Top Hats Monthly, Racing Pigeon Pictorial, and Tribune?



# Those tongues of gun fire

In the Middle East, killing your enemies sends a message to your friends. MARTIN WOOLLACOTT on the futile dialogue of death. Illustration by PETER TILL

WHATEVER their mother tongue, the peoples of the Middle East are all fluent in the region's second language, that of violence. The messages they exchange are literally written in blood. They are almost always ineffective. And they have increasingly become messages addressed as much to one's own side as to the enemy. The stereotypical Israeli situation is one in which you kill people in order to send a message to another government that it should use violence against the people who are using violence against you. You do this without real expectation that it will work but in order to prove to your own people that you are doing what you can. The typical Syrian situation is one in which

you permit your proxies to kill people in order to send a message that life will continue to be painful for another government until it gives you a settlement on your terms, which, however, are less important in themselves than as a signal of toughness to your own people. The typical situation of what are called terrorist movements is that you kill people in order to prove to your own people, to the Israeli government, and to Arab governments, that you are a power to be reckoned with. The use of force arises in part from the need to maintain a certain image and to convince potentially angry and cynical men and women that you are worthy of leading them. There never was an age of innocence in the modern Middle East. But there was a time when politicians and

soldiers, and the leaders of armed movements, genuinely thought that force could bring relatively easy solutions. If so, it is long past. Violence used in pursuit of clear objectives — smash the PLO, drive out the Jew, wake up the West to the Palestinian cause — was bad enough. But what we see now is violence as an aid to political survival. Even the Islamists no longer believe in the attainability of their supposed ultimate aims. The splits within both Hamas and Hizbollah show that there are some who, at least tactically, believe in politics now rather than in protracted war. Of those speaking the language of violence in the Middle East, very few really believe that it will get them what they say they expect it to get. And they all have plenty of experience of violence getting them the opposite of what they wanted. For Shimon Peres, this is a hard time. Twelve years ago his first task as prime minister of a national unity government was to extract the Israeli army from Lebanon, where it was dangerously dug in after the previous Likud government's invasion of Lebanon went

# The Ecstasy and the agony



Sara Maitland

DO YOU personally think that if a new youth dance venue is to receive a licence, it should provide a "chill out space" where dancers can find a little quiet and a proper supply of cold water so that they can counteract the effects of taking an illegal drug? (Don't worry if you know nothing about the subject — that is apparently irrelevant.) I'm a journalist, so I'm allowed an opinion: on this or almost anything else, and — although lots of people may disagree — no one is going to call for my resignation. Paul Betts is a bereaved father so he's allowed an opinion too. The death of a child is a dreadful thing, and I hesitate even to say this, but it does not make anyone an expert on whatever the child died from. On the contrary, it might reasonably be held that someone as close to such a tragedy is less likely to hold a balanced view than someone with more distance and overview. Nonetheless much of the press has been quoting him with approval while calling for the resignation of Mary Hartnoll, who is paid £76,000 a year, precisely because she is an expert. Moreover she expressed her expert opinion — that it is counterproductive to tell people lies, and particularly lies that their experience has taught them are lies — within a perfectly proper professional context. She wrote an internal memo to her fellow professionals in direct relation to what she was asked to do, and she was asked to do it. Now in fairness I should say that I agree with her. I do not think that fear is an effective way of changing behaviour. I do want my own children to have the best possible information on which to make their own decisions. I do not think that people old enough to vote should be lied to. I do not think that Ecstasy is the worst thing in the world; there are far more alcohol-related deaths than Ecstasy-related deaths but we can still get "sensible drinking" advice. I would in fact go further than Ms Hartnoll: I believe there is

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# Smallweed



THAT unlikely combo, John Major and the Vote-Rockers, may prove another triumph of the Prime Minister's mastery of "game theory", a science so esoteric as to be

understood only by two Nobel prizewinners plus Our John. The story so far: Rock The Vote is a non-political (ie anti-Tory) campaign to persuade young people to heed Robert "Tamworth Manifesto" Peel and "register, register, register" for the vote. Central Office's endorsement of RTV was, according to the Daily Telegraph (April 6), further evidence of the PM's lamentable soft-headedness: indeed, "the current Conservative leadership is... in a state of denial about who its enemies are." This newspaper, however, congratulated him (April 11) for endorsing a campaign that can do his party little but harm. Come election night, both viewpoints could be proved quite wrong. On May 30, 1998, the Crossman diaries record Cabinet discussing proposals to drop the voting age to 18 from 21. High ideal-

ism was represented by Michael Stewart, Peter Shore, Tony Benn and Gerald Gardner: just about everybody else worried over Labour's election chances. One fear was that Celtic youth would misguidedly vote Scottish or Welsh nationalist: limiting the reduction to 30 could safeguard against such foolishness. In the event, 18 it was, amid a general feeling that youth was, on the whole, for Harold. Two years and 19 days later, the young idealists marched to the polls: by nightfall, one ERG Heath was heading for 10 Downing Street. A lesson not lost, we think, on the present addressee. WAR, ALL-OUT war, on the weaseliest of weasel words, "appropriate", a clogging, cloying all-purpose term of bureaucratic approval

whose acronym "Inappropriate" is rapidly becoming to the Britain of the 1990s what "un-American" was to the post-war United States. Latest sightings include, from Thursday night, a BBC report that two nursing employees had been arrested, their crimes including "inappropriate attitudes" to mental patients. Over on Newsnight, John Prescott dead-batted queries on his boss Mr Blair's tax-cutting zeal with: "a statement will be made at the appropriate time" (it would be a start were TB to make his statements in the appropriate country; Thursday's olive-branch to top-rate payers was delivered from Wall Street). Those who would appropriate appropriate include popular fiction writers. Reading in John Grisham's trillion-seller The Client (Century, 1993): "she hugged him appropri-

ately", perhaps we should expect no better, but did PD James in Original Sin (Faber, 1994) really need an inappropriate (re a female detective's trousers) and an appropriate (re the entrance to a convent) on the same page? There are others. Be warned: the A-word is sprayed around like fire-fighting foam by those who would bury us all beneath a ton of codes of conduct and "voluntary" guidelines. Resist. Hug someone inappropriately every day. ANOTHER front, another war, or, in this case, a crusade. In the wake of the Tamworth disaster (sorry, fightback) Michael Howard called yesterday for a "crusade" to remind voters of Labour's flaws and the Tories' overall wonderfulness. This is merely the latest Conservative crusade: early in his

premier-ship, Mr Major launched a "crusade against crime". About two years later, he announced a "crusade against crime", the first crusades having apparently got lost in the desert. The real crusades, of course, were mostly disasters, full of desperate accidents, catastrophes, vile misunderstandings and counter-productive results. Odd that the Tories should be so keen on them (except that so much of their recent record hauntingly resembles the crusades). TRAINSPOTTING (the gentle pastime, not the cinematic adventures of Caledonian morphinists) survives and thrives. Last week's tentative suggestion that St Albans Abbey-Watford Junction may be England's shortest branch line brought forth hoots of derision from the locomotives.

They give the crown to the 1/2-mile Stourbridge Junction-Stourbridge Town line in West Midlands, although "the true connoisseur" writes one spotter, prefers the quietest to the shortest: one train travels daily once each way on the 2 1/2-mile Watford Junction-Croxley Green branch, finishing at 6.54am. After this, the tracks doze in peace. HEAD BEADLE John Simpson is not a volatile, media-loving police chief in the manner of Manchester's much-missed James Anderson, but yesterday, he was firmly on the record with his views on police headgear. A "working party" is expected to recommend that forces replace the bobby's helmet with something more with-it (probably a long peaked baseball cap, the better to assist officers to squint at

overtime forms or at any members of the public they wish to shoot). The nation's smallest force is having none of it: Mr Simpson and his two beaules will continue to patrol Burlington Arcade in their traditional toppers. The review "wouldn't affect us at all", he said, going on to praise the traditional helmet, strong enough to take a constable's weight should he wish to peer over a wall.

FINALLY, how could we last week have placed Google 23 miles east of Hull, thinking 18,284 Yorkshire folk in the North Sea? In the Brigade of Guards there are, famously, no excises, but in the 317 cadet detachment, Queen's Rgt, the honour code ran as follows: (a) It wasn't my fault, (b) I was told to do it, (c) any chance of a lift back to Rear Echelon?

صلى الله عليه وسلم

Chapeltown was notorious even before the horrific murder of pensioner Stefan Popovich - comics used it as shorthand for grim. But MARTIN WAINWRIGHT discovers a community determined to pull together.

Photograph by DON MCPHEE



Playdays... Mojees Childcare in Chapeltown (above) is a self-supporting business; streets often portrayed as mean and dangerous hide a wealth of communal organisations

stasy  
agony

# Random death in the life of a Leeds suburb

THE STORY could hardly have been more horrible: a pensioner dragged from his car after asking the way, kicked and beaten and left to die in the street, for the sake of his wristwatch, his wedding ring and a pathetic £50. But Serbian war veteran Stefan Popovich, his bereaved family and friends were not the only innocent victims of last week's moment of evil in a very ordinary side-turning in Leeds.

Yorkshire actor, kicks off an account of a visit last year with: "I've been to Chapeltown, and I haven't been mugged, stabbed or offered narcotic delights."

only in some degree that rudeness which is peculiar to them". But they left a sound physical base for the other self-improvers who followed: Jews ("Chapeltown is a little Israel in full working order," said a local paper in the early fifties), east Europeans, Caribbean immigrants and arrivals from the Indian subcontinent.

ment), thumbs through a similar list of 89 local organisations - the CAB to Jitterbugs Nursery - which try to meet for a monthly networking lunch. "Look, I'm not a Pollyanna in rose-coloured glasses," she says. "But we're here because my husband got a cheap flat in Chapeltown Road when he was a student, we've made lots of friends and become very involved with the church; and this is the part of the world I like and where I want to be."



finding that a widespread fear of going out at night has, for some people, extended into daylight.

highly concentrated levels of deprivation which give under-qualified school-leavers small hopes of a fair start in life. Leeds' unemployment percentage of 9.4 shoots up to 33.9 per cent in the Markham Avenue area, 33.7 per cent in Leopold Street and 38 per cent in the Granges, the grid of substantial redbrick houses where the Phelps live. Unemployment among 16-24s, at 15 per cent for the city, was 35.2 per cent in Markham Avenue, 42.7 per cent in Leopold Street and 46.3 per cent in the Granges. The figures are now 18 months old, but today's ratios are little changed.

agencies tackling this problem, in ways which could provide models for Taggart. His Chapeltown and Harehills Assisted Learning Community School, housed in Leeds' old tram depot, offers extra help to children - mostly Afro-Caribbean - who have flunked or suffered from low teacher expectations at school. "We try to teach them to believe in themselves and develop confidence," he says. "By providing extra support families pay a minimum £1 fee for evening or weekend classes). We hope to help the kids cope with work and school, and perhaps change the attitudes towards them of some of their teachers."

recently had the offer to go full-time," she says. "But I love it here. I've lived in Chapeltown now for 37 years and I love it here - it's my community and I want to put some quality work back in for the children."

# New rules for a ruler beating a full retreat



Martin Kettle

WEEK tomorrow, Queen Elizabeth II will be 70 years old. Three score years and ten is an important milestone in any person's life.

British public life. In the 1980s, any royal birth, marriage, death or anniversary was an excuse for something on a show. Yet the woman who is not only our Head of State but who is also acknowledged as one of the few members of the House of Windsor to emerge unscathed from the past decade is planning a low-profile day. She will celebrate her 70th birthday deep inside a distant palace, far out of range of the telephone lines of the paparazzi, ignored by a nation of Sunday shoppers.

They are certain that the death of the Queen Mother will one day prove that the British is as powerful as ever. Forget Diana and Fergie, they are saying, just keep following the coffin.

Nothing in the royals' outlook equips them to do more than wave at the world beyond the Palace walls

inheritance or outlook escape them to do more than wave at the world beyond the palace walls.

# The hamster that lay down but took forever to die



Suzanne Moore

SEX and death. That is what you give children for, isn't it? So that they learn about these vital topics. You know - the cycle of life, respect for all living things, the curious process of reproduction - a pet of one's own is supposed to provide all this and more. Learning that rabbits do indeed breed like rabbits, that disturbed mice will eat their own babies, that tadpoles rarely make it to full froghood, that a dog's life means endless attempts at fornication with things that are not actually dogs. These are the essential facts of life we must be passed on to our own offspring.

Much discussion was had about tombstones. "I hate it when they say that the person just fell asleep," said my oldest. "It isn't just like falling asleep, is it?" We talked of cremation and burial, of reincarnation and of hamster heaven, imagined as a great wheel in the sky.

The day finally came when Patchy could no longer be resurrected by a soft drink and we found him stiff at the bottom of the cage. My youngest was distraught, wanting to phone Childline. Her sister was awfully sad. I felt that I must preserve him till she came home. I wrapped him in Microwave film and put him in a Chinese take-away box with a few dried flowers around him. Then he started to smell and had to be put out the back where the cat tried to get him out of the box. Is there no dignity?





صحة من الامم

# The judge they'd like to lock up

### As Chief Inspector of Prisons, Stephen Tumim battled Whitehall, and Michael Howard, to build a decent system. His new book shows an undimmed talent to embarrass. Photograph by MARTIN ARGLES



The Joanna Coles interview

**S**TEPHEN Tumim answers the door with the announcement that he has just refused to debate whether Prisons Work on Radio 4's World Tonight with the minister for prisons "Ann... Ann...". He calls her "Witherspoon" in interviews. Winifred Tumim, his wife, as she propels us briskly from under her feet in the kitchen towards his study.

"A terribly ugly woman, what," giggles Tumim as he leads the way to his desk at the back of the house, a crozier's throw from Buckingham Palace. In the passage, he stumbles over a painting he thinks might be a Tissot and "worth a lot of money, I hope". Then he pours us both a sherry and announces the official way to address him now is as "his honour Stephen Tumim. I don't use it myself of course, but the point is I'm no longer called a judge".

facilities worse than those envisaged by the Victorians. But what exactly has Tumim been up to since his release? "I'm working *really* hard, what," he says, eyes gleaming through his half-moon glasses. This is not a joke. Five minutes later, he's still chanting through his list of projects. There was the Channel 4 film in the Caymans Islands, a trip to St Helena "and back on the splendid ship to Cardiff," a trip to Uganda examining prisons, a series of interviews with collectors for the Royal Academy Magazine, his chairmanship of a mental health tribunal, the Charlie Douglas Home Fellowship to compare European jail sentences with ours; a research fellowship at "Teddy Hall" (St Edmund Hall, Oxford); a series of lectures at Cambridge; two series for BBC Television — one on Streetwise Justice, the other on poverty — and finally, he's supposed to be writing a book called *A Judge Goes To Prison*. And he insists on eight hours sleep a night.

He steps for breath. "I'm overdoing it, aren't I? Retirement is okay if you're going to cabbage it, but if you're going to do things, you have to be selective. I haven't been, have I?"

Though Howard's decision not to renew his contract could hardly have come as a surprise, Tumim seems mildly disoriented by the decision. He was disappointed to be passed over for chairmanship of the new Criminal Cases Review Authority and I wonder if he misses his old job? "I miss not having an office. Working at home, I feel I'm intruding during the day. I also felt I had unfinished business. I'm sorry I didn't get my idea of industrial prisons — where prisoners work for a real wage — accepted. It's not sufficiently politically attractive, you know." He glances across the room, with his leg fire bubbling and its bookshelves bursting with lovingly collected first editions of Laurence Sterne and Max Beerbohm: "I did think I must rush and write a book straight away. It's supposed to be about how I arrived at my views, but do you know, I've just read through bits of it and I find it boring me. Ha ha, what?"

But his talent to embarrass remains gloriously intact. Last Tuesday, one week after Howard's White Paper argued that mandatory longer sentences would deter criminals, Tumim and a fellow group of legal experts published *Prisons 2000*, a book which argues precisely the opposite.

And yesterday his influence on the quality of prison life was felt yet again, with the Home Office announcement that the practice of "slopping out" had officially ended. The final pot was handed in at Armlay Jail in Leeds, prompting Paul Cavadino to the Penal Affairs Consortium to comment: "It's a tribute to Judge Tumim's tenacity that he never ceased to harass the Government to improve sanitation." He added that without Tumim's persistence the prison service would still be faced with sanitary



Stephen Tumim... "I'm sorry I didn't get my idea of industrial prisons — where prisoners work for a real wage — accepted. It's not sufficiently politically attractive, you know"

feel about that? "I see the history of prisons as a pendulum, there are good periods and bad periods, progress and no progress. During the period after the 1980 disorders, there were some very helpful reports by Lord Woolf (Tumim contributed to Woolf's report on Strangeways) and things looked good. But now the pendulum has swung the other way. We have gone backwards. The things I see mattering, humanity and education, have been diminished."

Why? Surely all the blame cannot be laid at the Conservative's door, after all it was Douglas Hurd, the then Home Secretary, who appointed Tumim with a specific brief to go public on what he found. "That was a different time. Douglas Hurd appointed me to give people more knowledge about the prison system. It was a very liberal period, experiments were taking place under a different culture. But the ideas are different now. Money's been cut, most prisons have been cut back by something like 40 per cent. Let me give you my short lecture on prisons." And he embarks on a passionate defence of justice rather than punishment, education rather than minimum sentences.

"How you deal with crime depends on what sort of people you send to prison. We tend to send men, under 25, who come from broken homes and did very badly at school because they didn't try very hard and played truant, what one might call jobs. They're not very dangerous, and they desperately need proper training, moral, social and academic education. It's a very demanding and hard job for the prison service. If you cut down the money, you are going to store up more crimes for the future. These boys will come out bitter, not trained and not fit for work in the community we live in." He pauses for dramatic effect. "And they're going to be with us for another 50 years."

So what does he recommend? "Oh, the cure for prisons lies in pre-primary education," then he laughs. "Ha ha, what?" There is a knock on the door. "Come in!" "Apparently you were on the news after all," cries Winifred. "Sarah's just rung to say from Devon, it must have been Channel 4, anyway they did a huge amount, it just wasn't on this horrid news." "Was it offensive or insensitive?" "She said you were very

good on justice." "Hurray!" proclaims Tumim. "More sherry?" asks Winifred. "No thank you. What time's supper?" "Eight o'clock, it's only baked potatoes and sausages I'm afraid."

"Good oh," says his honour. WITH his glass conservatory ceiling and a cutting and a child but no money, and that when he came out, he'd probably do it again. I asked him if he had any ambition and he said he'd like to work for someone he respected. But he didn't know anyone he respected. I felt he was not unintelligent and one felt a total hopelessness about the whole thing. "Would there be more hope under Labour?" "I don't know. I can't get involved in party politics. I'm critical of current policies."

Fiddling with his bow tie, Tumim appears an odd mixture, somewhere between an old-fashioned Tory and a patrician Liberal, who loves lunching at the Garrick Club before striding back home down the Mall. "Oh, my views aren't liberal so much as those of activity, to close the gap be-

tween prisoners and the community," he insists. For a long time, Tumim rose without trace. A barrister specialising in divorce, he did not take silk, and shuffled on to become a circuit judge. It was not a particular ambition. "Oh no, I simply thought I was working too hard so I became a judge, ha ha." He was 57 when Hurd eventually plucked him from relative anonymity and gave him a high profile, something he clearly relishes. Why then does he think he turned out to be such a remarkable inspector? "I'm very curious. I'm fairly independent."

So what, I wonder, doesn't he like about himself? "I have a low boredom threshold, I get bored easily and then I disengage." Did he mind the gradual creeping out by Whitehall? "I'm not too worried what people think, I'm fairly thick-skinned, what he ha." But didn't he feel exasperated by his sense of things going backwards. "I accept politicians have their own agenda which is concerned with votes. It's different to mine. I wanted only to report what I saw in prisons."

Over the baked potatoes and a bottle of Saint-Emilion 1982, he ponders once more on what he will do now. Holidays are spent walking in Scotland or Cornwall, though he is "very fond of the West Indies". Week-ends are spent with his four granddaughters. Two of his three daughters, Olivia and Emma live near London (both are profoundly deaf) while Matilda, an artist, lives in the Orkneys. But what about his weaknesses? "I suppose if I would say I am a journalist."

He found the prison service in Uganda both liberal and caring, though there wasn't enough money even to buy the prisoners a football to kick around. "But their manner was impressive." Then he went to St Helena, where they have a grand total of six prisoners. "I arrived at the prison and the door was wide open and the officers had gone out to tea. I said to the inmates 'Why don't you escape?' They said, 'Oh it's Sunday afternoon. Where would we go?' "Time for the nine o'clock news," says Winifred.

## Shakespeare goes from Bard to verse in LA

### GARY TAYLOR sees the playwright reinvented by Knots Landing's finest

"GREW up in South Philadelphia," the ageing actor explained, his once rich voice as was a rough neighbourhood. But I was more afraid of Shakespeare than I was of Jack Dillinger. Shakespeare wrote high-falutin' words that were only understood by high-falutin' people and when you read him you found out you were stupid."

The actor was Jack Klugman, most familiar as the aloof sports reporter in the long running American television show *The Odd Couple*. But the occasion of his remarks was an even odder coupling: the Sixth World Shakespeare Congress, held all this week in Los Angeles, a union of showbiz glitz and academic nerd-earnestness. The congress, which has convened every five years since 1971, is a triumph of international scholarly diplomacy. More than 1,000 Shakespeareans from 40 countries are listed in the programme, which presents a unique snapshot of the current state of Shakespeare's global reputation. Predictably, English language nations dominate the proceedings; but Shakespeare belongs to the United States.

Americans dominated this World Congress, as they have dominated all its predecessors. The real measure of power and prestige is the list of 95 invited speakers. The countries best represented on that list are India (four), Italy (four), Canada (five), Germany (five), Japan (six), the United Kingdom (17) — and the United States (40). The only memorable talk I heard was given by the Harvard philologist Stanley Cavell, who wittily criticised the pretensions to analytical rigour of some "sceptical" literary theorists. Of course, it is impossible, without having six bodies, to attend every conference. Perhaps critical fireworks were exploding in every session I did not attend. Or perhaps not.

One session I did attend was billed as "Shakespeare Does Hollywood", an occasion on which "the stars of stage, screen, television, and the music industry" would "do" Shakespeare. After all, what Los Angeles means, for most people, is Hollywood. Hollywood, it turns out, is mostly populated by mediocre, under-employed performers. Few of the names on the programme were recognizable to anyone in the audience; most were refugees from once popular TV shows.



The hit of the evening was a group of elementary school children performing *Pyramus and Thisbe*, including a very small, very cute black boy as the Lion.

The rest was kitsch. Some of the performers had not even bothered to memorise their lines; they just read them, usually badly. A long musical number — supposedly nothing to do with Shakespeare, but the audience didn't mind. After a long day of listening to undistinguished papers, they were just happy to be there, happy to feel that what they did in their classrooms and libraries was somehow part of the glory of Hollywood.

in a treasure chest which she then slammed shut. Darkness. Applause. Applause for everything. The audience clapped hands, kept time, and even sang along when Al Woodson of *The Tempestations* sang his ancient hit single, *My Girl*. This, of course, had absolutely nothing to do with Shakespeare, but the audience didn't mind. After a long day of listening to undistinguished papers, they were just happy to be there, happy to feel that what they did in their classrooms and libraries was somehow part of the glory of Hollywood. "I hear you say 'What can make me feel this way?' My bard, talkin' 'bout my bard."

## That ain't no way to treat your rabbi

### RONALD BERGAN on the Gentile portrayal of Jews in US movies

MARLON Brando got it partly wrong on CNN the other night. In discussing the portrayal of Jews in the movies, he could not see that they have been almost as racially stereotyped as "the nigger and the greaseland...". He went on to claim that "we never saw the likes of those they know perfectly well that that's where you draw the wagons around."

Most of the moguls might have been Jewish in Hollywood but Jews were either invisible or caricatured as much as they were later idealised. There has been an implicit anti-Semitism in films over the years, from patronising ethnic comedies or schmaltzy melodramas such as *The Jazz Singer* (1927), to *Schindler's List* (1993), in which the Jews are pathetic victims saved by a handsome gentile. For most of Hollywood's history, stars had to hide their Jewish origins behind Aryan names like Kirk Douglas (born Danjlovitch Demsky). However, it was permissible for certain supporting actors or comedians like *The Marx Brothers*, George Burns or Phil Silvers, because Jews were "characters" or funny, not heroic or romantic.

When Otto Preminger was casting the role of the idealistic Zionist freedom fighter in *Exodus* (1960), he naturally chose the handsome, blue-eyed WASPish Paul Newman. It was only in the late sixties, with the success of Dustin Hoffman in *The Graduate*, that others like Barbra Streisand and Richard Dreyfuss were allowed to make their mark.

Once a character is proclaimed a Jew in a movie, a problem arises. In the 1947 film *From Here to Eternity*, Robert Ryan is a rabid, Jew-hating soldier who murders Sam Levene. It is up to gentiles Robert Mitchum and Robert Young to expose him as the murderer, and to preach tolerance. Even in a boxing drama like *Body and Soul* (1947), in which John Garfield (Julius Garfinkle) played an unemployed Jewish lad who takes up prize fighting, being Jewish was an issue. Woody Allen, whose films have been called "chicken soup for the soul" has perpetuated the reputation of the nebbish who falls for WASP goddesses (Diane Keaton, Mia Farrow and Helena Bonham Carter). He has also sentimentalised Jews such as the spiritual rabbi in *Crimes and Misdemeanors* or he sees them as warm, though vulgar and life-saving agents. Hollywood movies have done little for the image of Jews over the years, and one cannot blame Jewish comedian Mort Sahl who, half way through the 220-minute *Exodus*, stood up and shouted: "Let my people go!"

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صوتنا من الداخل

Simon Wiesenthal has been reviled as much by the Jewish establishment as the Nazi war criminals he has spent his life tracking down. In an exclusive extract from her new book, HELLA PICK explains why

# Hunter hero is now the haunted

**V**IENNA'S nondescript apartment block, though only minutes walk from its imperial palaces, is outside the normal tourist trek. There is nothing distinguished or distinguishing about Number 6, Salztor-gasse, a tall box-like block of flats. Hard to find because it is so discreetly small, one of the dozen or so nameplates carries the simple legend "Dokumentationszentrum". You press the buzzer to be identified. Once inside there is no foyer, just a narrow stone-paved passage to a slow-moving lift. Up to the second floor, and you find a bored policeman lounging on the staircase guarding the entrance to three shabbily furnished rooms, lined from floor to ceiling with box-files, books, and framed attacks on his integrity never cease to wound him deeply. By way of reassurance, he is proud of every honour that comes his way and has come to believe in his own mystique.

I knew very little of all this when Lord Weidenfeld proposed that I should write Simon Wiesenthal's biography. Wiesenthal's name is virtually synonymous with Nazi-hunting. Love him or hate him, he is one of the outstanding individuals which this century has produced. Yet there were only his own two volumes of patchwork memoirs — *The Murderers Amongst Us* and *Justice Not Vengeance* — and there was no comprehensive account or assessment of his life.

Before a final decision to write the biography was taken, I went to Vienna to meet Wiesenthal. It was obvious that the project would need his co-operation, but I was equally firm that he must not be allowed any editorial control. If he was only interested in eulogy, the exercise would be pointless. Like many others, I was initially taken aback by his surroundings. I was also surprised by his warmth, his humour and his emotionalism. And I was gripped by the vivid language he used to describe not only the long-past, but also contemporary events. Like many others I was impressed with his ability to spark attention and provoke thought. Under different circumstances, Wiesenthal would surely have become a stellar figure in public relations.

He agreed to co-operate with me, insisting only that he should be allowed to check the manuscript for factual error. Of course there is often only a narrow divide between the correction of fact and editorial interference. But he kept to his word. He gave me as much time as I asked, and this added up to many days of questioning. He urged his wife and daughter to speak with me, and gave me unrestricted access to his archives. Though he knew that I was also interviewing some of his sharpest, toughest critics, he never once commented on the way I was researching the book. More

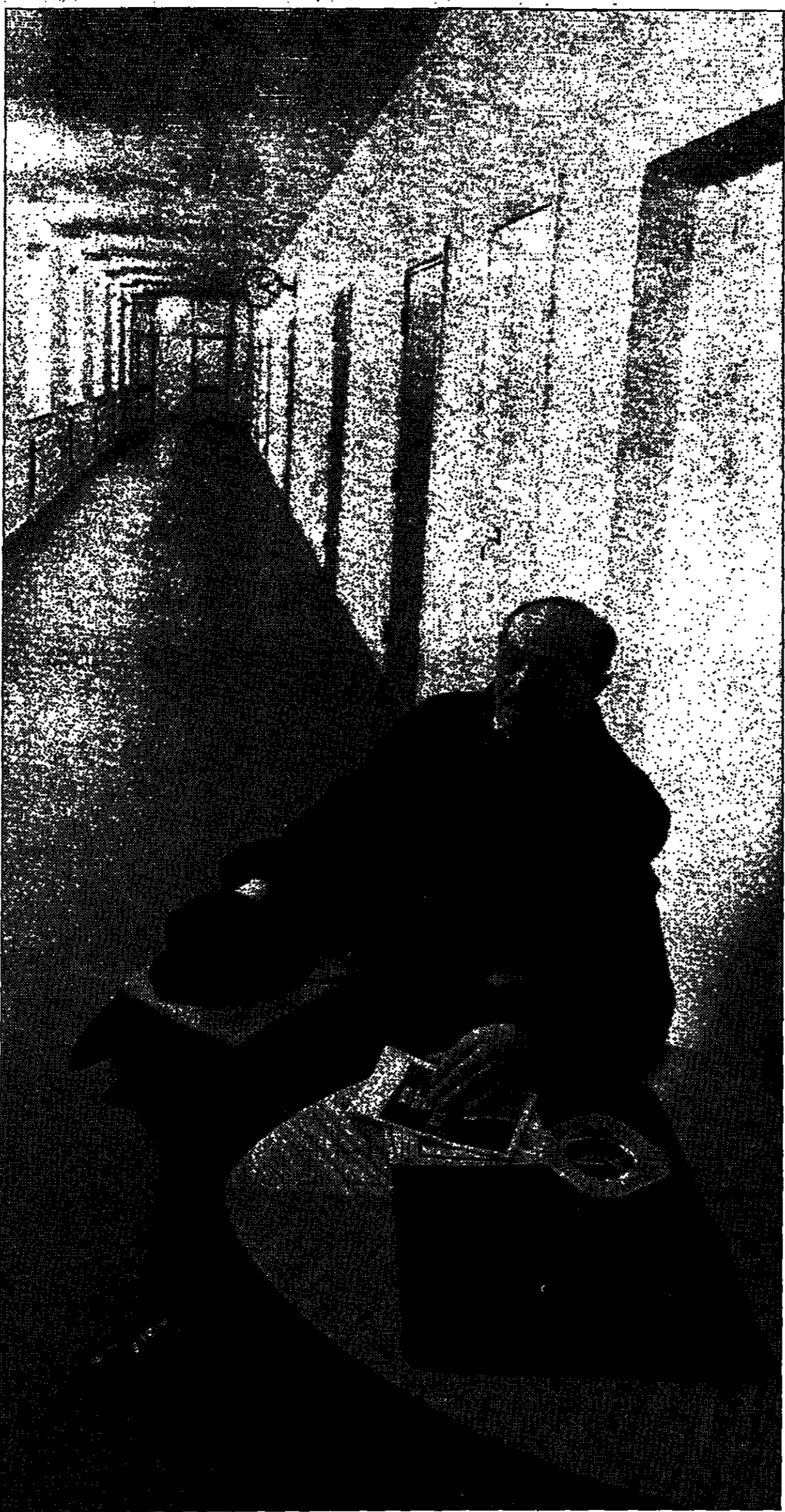
Holocaust and about genocide beyond the reach of historical revisionism. Firmly rejecting the concept of mass guilt, he believes with single-minded passion that this process alone can forewarn future generations against neo-Nazism. Add to this Wiesenthal's conviction that war crimes trials are a vital tool of the healing process towards reconciliation, and it becomes easier to understand the grandiose yet tunnel vision that has consumed him for half a century.

Now 87, Wiesenthal's only other craving is for recognition of his achievements, of being seen as an uncomfortable conscience that has forced the international community, particularly Germany and Austria, to confront the lessons of the Holocaust. Though he is no newcomer to controversy, the recurring attacks on his integrity never cease to wound him deeply. By way of reassurance, he is proud of every honour that comes his way and has come to believe in his own mystique.

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One man's lonely war: Wiesenthal has faced sniping from the World Jewish Congress as well as from fascist sympathisers

important. Wiesenthal made no attempt to use his fact-check as a backdoor method of tampering with the contents of the book, even though it was obvious to me, having come to know him well, that there is much material he would have preferred not to see at all, or at the very least presented differently.

I would be blind not to realise that Wiesenthal's "good behaviour" has a great deal to do with the fact that, notwithstanding his shortcomings, not least his tendency to self-aggrandisement, he emerges in this biography as a sympathetic and significant figure. Starting without preconceptions, I came away fully convinced that he deserves to be counted as one of the handful of individuals who have helped to condition moral and ethical attitudes during a period of great upheaval and self-doubt.

This conclusion has little to do with his prowess as a Nazi-hunter. Indeed, it quickly became obvious to me that the Nazi-hunter label — from which he does not demur — is, in many ways, a misnomer.

Such a job description is far too narrow for a man whose over-arching concern has been to tackle the great issues of guilt, punishment and forgiveness in the wake of the Holocaust, and who has intervened at crucial times to prevent the international community from losing interest in confronting the mass murder phenomenon.

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But Wiesenthal knew and sensed enough about the atmospheres among the Americans with whom he had worked in the immediate aftermath of the war to realise that the Allies' concern to have Nazis purged from positions of power and influence in Germany and Austria was waning. Allied enthusiasm for war crimes trials was being eroded, and little pressure was put on the German or Austrian authorities to bring Nazi criminals to account.

He was still more disappointed when he realised that the new state of Israel, preoccupied with the more immediate concerns of establishing its legitimacy and security, had put the capture and trials of Nazi criminals way down its priorities.

Almost single-handed, Wiesenthal fought back to maintain the search for war criminals and to keep war crimes trials on the international agenda. He had vowed to himself that he would devote his life to ensure that neither the victims nor their murderers would be forgotten; and he gave up any thought of return-

ing to his pre-war profession as an architect, or of emigrating to Israel. Convinced that there was little purpose in continuing to work with the US occupation forces in Austria, he set up his first Documentation Centre in Linz in 1947, which had as one of its main aims to collect evidence from concentration camp survivors before they dispersed to remake their lives.

He also wrote articles exposing Nazis, he spoke out at public meetings, and in private contact with the western allies, against any let-up of the search for suspected mass murderers, and for the imperative of de-Nazification in public life.

But Wiesenthal's most graphic and far-reaching achievement during this period was to persist in searching for Adolf Eichmann even when others were ready to give up. He understood ahead of many that an Eichmann trial would bring to light such horrendous, detailed evidence of the Nazi killing machine that it would force a great soul-searching in Germany and Austria to come to terms with the past. He also judged that Holocaust denial would lose the last shreds of credibility.

Quite likely his most important contribution to the hunt for Eichmann came in 1947, when he prevented Vera Eichmann, who was living in the Austrian village of Altaussee, from having her husband certified as dead. Had Mrs Eichmann succeeded, the hunt on Eichmann might have been closed there and then. In 1958, Wiesenthal also found out accidentally, from a postcard shown to him by a fellow stamp-collector — his only hobby — that Eichmann was in Argentina. Together with a summary of all the evidence he had collected about Eichmann, he passed this information on to Nahum Goldman, President of the World Jewish Congress. He anticipated that Goldman would put the

WJC's resources behind the search. But nothing came of it. Instead, this incident fuelled a growing bitterness between Wiesenthal and the WJC.

It was only in 1957 that Israel's secret service, Mossad, acting on information from the public prosecutor in the Frankfurt, activated the search for Eichmann in Argentina which led to his capture three years later by a team led by the Mossad's chief at the time, Isser Harel. During that period, Wiesenthal had sporadic contact with a Mossad team in Austria, but otherwise had no connection with this decisive stage of the hunt for Eichmann.

In 1963, Wiesenthal published his book *I Hunted Eichmann*. This gave a somewhat overblown account of his endeavours up to 1954, but made no claims beyond that year, and was emphatic that many hands had been involved in Eichmann's capture. The book caught the popular imagination. It brought Wiesenthal his first taste of fame and was the beginning of the legend that grew around him as a superman Nazi-hunter. It prompted him to move to Vienna where he set up his Documentation Centre. He set his sights much higher now than he had done in Linz. His office in Vienna would "represent Austria's Jews in combating anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism by presenting historical material; to collaborate with the Austrian and German judicial authorities, and with Jewish organisations involved with clearing up the question of war criminals; and to undertake research to set straight the historical record."

But if Wiesenthal thought he had at last secured firm foundations for his life's work, he was mistaken. For many years to come he was reviled in Austria for daring to attack the country's political establishment for flirting with former Nazis. This came to a head in a long-lasting, embittered confrontation with Austria's socialist Chancellor, Bruno Kreisky.

Neither man emerges with any glory from a combat in which the two vied with each other to cast doubts on their integrity.

Kreisky's political heirs have concluded that his anti-Wiesenthal offensive is a blot on the socialist leader's record. They gave frank replies to my questions, and opened the inner recesses of the Kreisky archive. Today, Wiesenthal is honoured in Austria as a national icon who rightly demanded that Austria acknowledge its complicity with Nazism. Instead of claiming, as it had done for almost 50 years, that it was Hitler's victim, he has been awarded Austria's highest honours, and was chosen to speak at the UN last year on Austria's behalf to mark the Year of Tolerance.

Wiesenthal's conflict with Kreisky had lasted until the former Chancellor's death. It was rapidly succeeded by a new battle — this time between Wiesenthal and the leadership of the WJC, which has brought in reinforcements with the ex-Mossad man, Isser Harel, and of the two Nazi hunters, Serge and Beate Klarsfeld. The trigger for this battle was Wiesenthal's refusal to accuse Kurt Waldheim of war crimes — though he handed him a letter unfit to hold public office — and his argument that pressure from the WJC against Waldheim's election as Austrian head of state only served to rekindle anti-Semitism in Austria. The

WJC asserts that Wiesenthal bungled in his initial attempts to search for the truth about Waldheim, and afterwards bought himself respect in Austria by objecting to the international campaign against Waldheim.

There is evidence that the WJC's antagonism towards Wiesenthal has far deeper roots than the Waldheim affair, going even further back than the Eichmann case. Even so, I was taken aback by the sheer venom and determination to destroy Wiesenthal's reputation that I found in New York at the WJC headquarters, and in Washington with Eli Rosenbaum, formerly of the WJC and now head of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations. Rosenbaum is co-author of *Eichmann*, a book published in 1983, which alleges that Wiesenthal engaged in a cover-up for Waldheim. These people describe Wiesenthal as a tragic figure, a charlatan with a long record of failure and ineptitude. They left me in little doubt that if I failed to subscribe to their views, they would interpret my biography of Wiesenthal as a whitewash.

Rosenbaum and his allies recycled the anti-Semitism a few weeks ago in a German TV programme, which backfired on them because a spate of newspapers immediately sprung to Wiesenthal's

Photograph by LEIF ENGBERG

defence. All it seems to have achieved is a rekindling of interest in Wiesenthal's achievements.

Wiesenthal remains alert to the dangers of neo-Nazism, and combative, still campaigning for "justice not vengeance" but also bent on defending his reputation. He knows that the Vienna Documentation Centre will not survive him. But it will not be allowed to disappear into oblivion. The Wiesenthal Center in the US — which bears his name but otherwise has no formal link with his work — will inherit his archive and rebuild his Documentation Centre office in its Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles as a lasting record of his endeavours and of his relevance to contemporary conflicts and racial discrimination.

There will certainly be more to Wiesenthal's legacy: his message is not unrelated to the growing international acceptance of war crimes trials because of their intrinsic importance in documenting the unbearable. Similarly, his campaign for justice has contributed to the widely-held view that such trials are an essential part of eventual reconciliation in Bosnia, Rwanda or wherever else there is evidence of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

It is too early to know how future generations will see Wiesenthal. But it is not too soon to understand the significant contribution that he has made towards allowing the post-war generation of Germans and Austrians to come to terms with the Holocaust. When the history of the past 50 years is written, Wiesenthal will surely count among its heroes.

There has been an unrelenting tide of venom directed at Wiesenthal by the New York Jewish elite to destroy his reputation

He is not driven by vengeance. He does not even support the death penalty. He believes he was preserved for one purpose — to deter the emergence of neo-Nazi movements and bring Hitler's mass murderers to trial



Having survived the extermination camps, Wiesenthal was driven by the need to keep their memory alive

Hella Pick is a former diplomatic editor of the Guardian and a foreign correspondent. Her biography, Simon Wiesenthal, a Life in Search of Justice, is published on Monday by Weidenfeld & Nicolson at £20

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# MoneyGuardian

## Lenders fear exchange rate spectre

Teresa Hunter

**M**ORTGAGE lenders warned yesterday that any attempt to force the UK into a revamped European exchange rate mechanism would have dire consequences for the housing market.

Average house prices began to fall almost immediately Britain entered the Exchange Rate Mechanism in October 1990, going from a peak of \$66,811 at the end of that year to \$63,117 three months later.

By the time we pulled out in September 1992 prices were heading down towards \$61,000, where they lingered for some time before gradually easing to the current average price of \$63,210.

Halifax general manager David Gilchrist said it would be wrong to blame the ERM exclusively for prices falling, but admits that it deepened the recession. He said: "We would certainly be very concerned at any prospect of returning to a regime which meant higher and more vola-

tile interest rates. Anything which would cause borrowers to worry about a return to double-digit interest rates would have a negative impact on any housing market recovery."

UBS analyst Rob Thomas went as far as to describe any link between European currencies and sterling as "a disaster" for homebuyers. He said: "The market is still struggling to survive the last dose of pain inflicted on it by the ERM."

Their warnings came as Chancellor Kenneth Clarke began talks with EU finance ministers in Verona at the end of a week which had seen a variety of good news for Britain's 10 million mortgage borrowers.

The Nationwide cut its mortgage rates to 6.74 per cent — the lowest for 30 years, reducing monthly repayments on a \$50,000 loan by \$20 to \$338.08 as against \$358.07 when mortgage rates peaked in 1990.

A quarterly house price survey from the Halifax revealed that values rose by 1.5 per cent over the past three months,

with prices in some regions particularly buoyant.

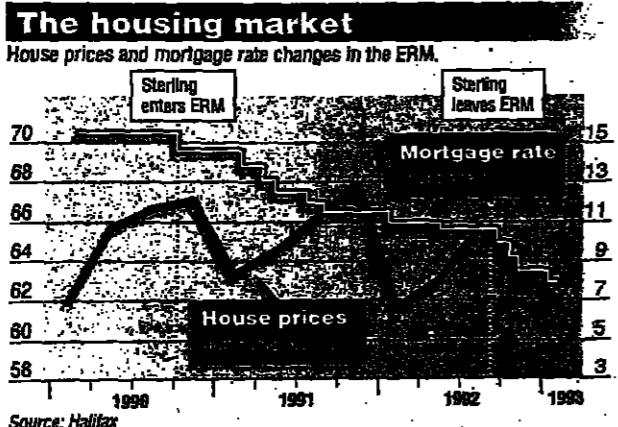
Houses in the South-east now cost 2.2 per cent more than at the end of last year and 1.3 per cent more than a year ago. Greater London saw prices rise by 2.8 per cent over the quarter. Similarly, house prices in the North grew by 2.2 per cent and in the South-west prices were up 1.5 per cent.

Two reports revealed a sharp drop in the numbers of people in negative equity, now below the one million mark for the first time since 1982. UBS estimates that rising prices have released 280,000 families from the blight. And Woolwich economist Martin Ellis said his report, due next week, would confirm these figures.

Lenders are eagerly awaiting April's mortgage transaction and house price figures for the final proof that the long-awaited recovery in the housing market has begun and can be sustained.

For the time being they prefer to remain sceptical, although, with mortgage repayments eating up just 11 per cent of a first-time buyers' earnings compared with 30 per cent in 1980, the signs are good.

Lenders are less concerned about the impact of a pending general election, believing a Labour victory at the polls would not have a negative impact on recovery, although the Woolwich's Martin Ellis warned borrowers not to expect significant house price rises, whoever wins. He said: "Low inflation means prices will not rise so high, and will fall again when the cycle turns down. Negative equity is here to stay."



Seven year itch... Brian and Jacqueline Kitching are going to the ombudsman after insurers Legal & General withdrew underpinning commitment. PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD RAYNER

## Cracks begin to appear as house market eases

Ian Wylie

**T**HE Insurance Ombudsman has thrown a lifeline to some desperate homeowners by promising the speedier handling of disputes over subsidence claims. But while the move could help free up the market, any increase in property sales is likely to reveal the full scale of the subsidence problem.

And insurers are already warning that thousands of homeowners face another summer of subsidence because the low rainfall this winter has failed to replace moisture in clay soil.

Wrangles over subsidence can stretch on for years, blighting any prospect of moving for sufferers.

After seven years waiting for their insurer to proceed with underpinning, Jacqueline and Brian Kitching have decided to go to the Insurance Ombudsman. The couple bought their house in Stockton-on-Tees in 1971, but only became aware that it was affected by subsidence in 1977 when their lender, the Abbey National, refused an advance on their mortgage.

In 1989, when large cracks began to appear in the hall and living room, they made a claim against their Legal & General buildings insurance policy. L&G's loss adjuster agreed that underpinning was necessary, but when the surveyor estimated the cost of underpinning work at \$80,000, the insurer appointed new surveyors and retreated from its original commitment to underpinning.

In the seven years since the Kitchings made their claim, the insurance company has spent just \$9,000 on replacing drains, rain-proofing one of the bedrooms and felling some mature trees. Mr Kitching is a retired schoolteacher and Mrs Kitching plans to retire

in June, but the couple fear that without a saleable house they will have no capital to fund their retirement.

The full scale of the problem will only emerge when homeowners planning to sell call in the surveyors for property valuations as the market revives. In anticipation of rising costs, many insurers are raising premiums while others, such as AA Insurance, now offer policies which exclude subsidence cover.

The average subsidence claim takes at least two years to process but, at a conference this week organised by the Subsidence Claims Association, homeowners swapped tales of insurance companies which have delayed settlements by several years.

The conference urged desperate homeowners to approach the Insurance Ombudsman, Dorothy Rickman, principal assistant to the ombudsman, said the office has cleared its backlog and advised policyholders to approach the ombudsman now where the anticipated surge in complaints in two or three years time.

After subsidence claims peaked in 1991 at \$550 million, the ombudsman's office was flooded with complaints and policyholders were forced to wait up to four months. Now Mrs Rickman says ombudsman staff begin working on subsidence complaints within a week or two of receiving all the documents.

Before policyholders can approach the ombudsman, they need a letter from their insurance company agreeing that an impasse has been reached and that the insurer's own complaints procedures have been exhausted. Mrs Rickman said some insurers have a change of heart when they realise the policyholder is serious about contacting the ombudsman.

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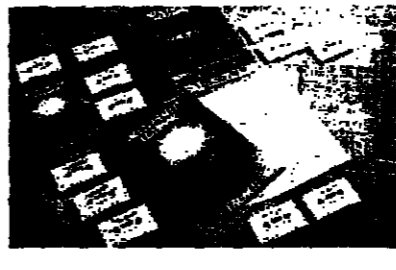
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Railtrack regulator offers unprecedented guarantees • Ministers seek to placate wary City investors

Watchdog offers easy ride

Simon Beavis, Lisa Buckingham and Rebecca Smithers

John Swift, the rail watchdog, is understood to be offering an unprecedented guarantee to Railtrack investors...

Mr Swift is a lawyer with a commercial background, unlike Prof Littlechild...

The regulatory assurances are also designed to counteract the increasingly potent threat by Labour to bring Railtrack under much stricter control...

The assurances follow this week's resignation of the director of rail franchising, Roger Salmon...

Although the Government knew as long ago as December that Mr Salmon wished to stand down...

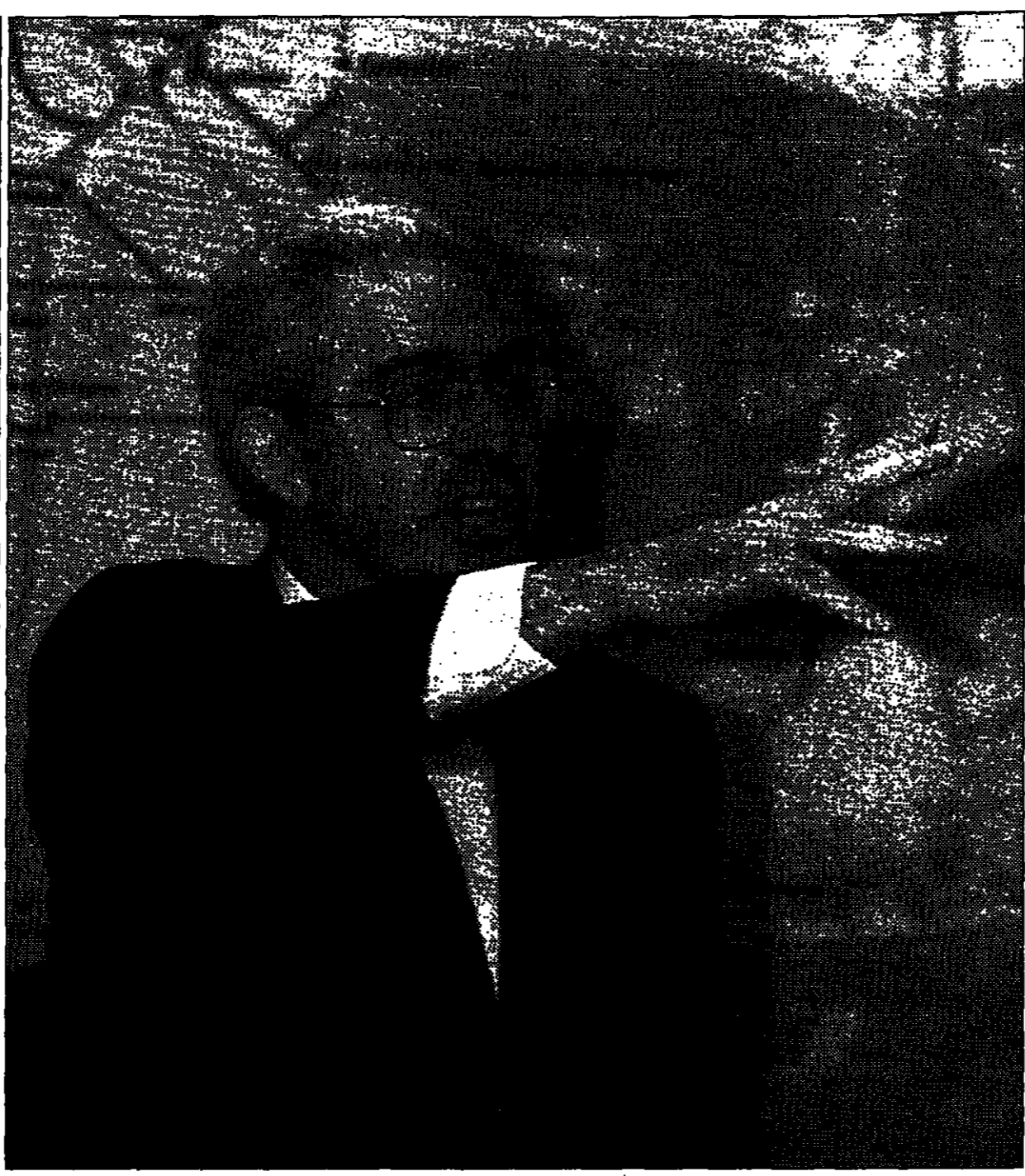
Labour is hoping to capitalise on those concerns by launching a Commons debate next Wednesday...

To preempt any public furor over the sale, it has insisted that Railtrack's directors, led by Robert Horton...

Ministers will try to present the pay structure as complying strictly with the Cadbury and Greenbury codes of corporate ethics...

Other utility bosses enjoyed large pay rises and instant share-option windfalls when their companies were sold off...

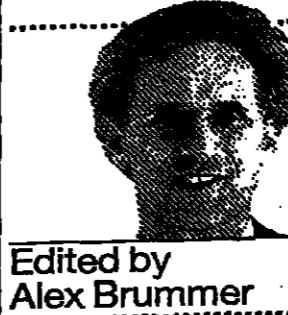
It is also being stressed that potential investors have been told that, unlike other watchdogs...



Now departing... Roger Salmon, at yesterday's Network South Central press conference...

Saturday Notebook

Old Lady wins by playing leap-frog



Edited by Alex Brummer

The Bank of England may have suffered stings and arrows for its lapses in the supervision of Barings...

However, because the SIB, it seems, has played no role in cleaning up the post-Barings mess...

Under the new regime, which takes effect from Monday, the Bank of England will take upon itself the authority to commission special accountants' reports...

In effect, the Bank is leap-frogging the difficulties which have arisen at international level...

In effect, the Bank is leap-frogging the difficulties which have arisen at international level...

Under these arrangements the Bank will not wait until its routine audit of a financial group's affairs...

No doubt there will be some complaints about all this being too late...

DEUTSCHE Telekom's rather deplorable declaration of interest...

Perhaps when the full report is published the MMC can look more defensible...

Bank of England widens powers

The Bank of England yesterday announced a significant increase in its powers to investigate the activities of financial institutions...

Exchange launches inquiry into leaked MMC electricity report

Generators' share prices rise sharply as Labour claims Government competition policy undermined by lack of integrity.

The Exchange's inquiry is understood to centre on rises in share prices on Thursday and Friday...

Shadow energy minister John Birtle said the leak threw "in question the integrity of the relationship between the secretary of state and the MMC"

The National Consumer Council director, Ruth Evans, warned the takersovers could lead to higher bills for customers.

The leak in the Economist sparked Labour protests that the Government's competition policy had been undermined.

Lloyd's to raise Names package

Lloyd's of London is to increase its proposed settlement offer to loss-stricken Names from £2.8 billion to more than £3 billion...

Newspaper Publishing asks for £23m to cover Independent loss

Newspaper Publishing Publishing, which owns the Independent and Independent on Sunday...

Table with columns: TOURIST RATES - BANK BELLS, Australia 1.8470, Austria 15.35, Belgium 45.10, Canada 1.9930, etc.

Three directors share £1m for mere 12 months' work

Three former directors of National Express will share compensation of nearly £1 million after spending a total of 12 months on the board...

Ford now in driving seat at Mazda

FORD Motor Company announced yesterday it is taking effective control of Japan's sixth-largest carmaker...

NI jobs initiative is 'all show, but no real action'

ATTEMPTS to accelerate economic development in Northern Ireland could collapse...

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "صوتنا من الامم"



# State-owned firm ponders ambitious move into race for telecoms rival Germans eyeing up C&W

Nicholas Bamister  
Technology Editor

**D**EUTSCHE Telekom's chief financial officer, Joachim Kroske, has surprised the City by revealing that the German state-owned telecommunications monopoly has started unofficial inquiries about making a takeover bid for Cable & Wireless.

C&W, he said. "We are involved in sensitive pre-exploratory talks. But there have been no official discussions." He added: "There is hardly a company that we aren't talking with. We need more time to figure out which constellation is possible and can be financed."

However, City analysts said that Deutsche Telekom was unlikely to make a full bid for C&W, though they accepted it was a strong contender to buy C&W's 80 per cent stake in Mercury Communications, the British telephone business, which would have to be sold if C&W and BT merged.

Due later this year, one analyst said: "Deutsche Telekom doesn't appear to be in a position to take on C&W, because it is heavily borrowed and it has enough obligations in its own market."

The group has borrowings of about 100 billion marks (\$44 billion). In addition the group, because it is still state-owned and without quoted shares, would be unable to make a reverse takeover bid for C&W.

# Red carpets and a blue Citroën bring Eastern promise

Chirac strikes big deals with Li Peng — no awkward human rights questions asked. ALEX DUVAL SMITH reports from Paris

**F**RANCE reaped trade deals worth more than £1 billion from the controversial red carpet treatment President Jacques Chirac gave China's prime minister earlier this week. As Li Peng leaves France today after four days of diplomatic incidents and protests about China's human rights record, Britain looks set to benefit also from the payback for President Chirac's hospitality.

Among trade contracts worth more than Fr11 billion (£1.5 billion) that have been agreed during Mr Li's visit is a preliminary aircraft-building agreement involving British Aerospace.

Chirac had been "taken for a ride". Chirac expressed disappointment that the Elysée Palace had promised more than the Chinese delegation actually delivered. GEC Alsthom had been hoping to confirm an order for 28 locomotives but did not even secure a "declaration of intent".

# Unholy adland gets the papal blessing

John Glover in Milan

**D**OES the Pope sell? The world is about to find out, for the pontiff has agreed to give — for the first time — a product testimonial.

John Paul II has already hit Italian, German and Spanish television screens, and will be going global as the year progresses. Next week, the poster part of the campaign gets under way. St Peter's successor, the world's most sought-after product-plugger, has been brought in to sell a double-CD featuring his recital of the full rosary as well as some of his reflections and a selection of Gregorian chants interpreted by the choir of Radio Vatican.



In all humility... The Pope bows to kiss the foot of one of 12 elderly men whose feet he washed during a traditional commerce-free ceremony in St John Lateran's Basilica, Rome

glassware for his private apartments. Following the visit, Calp ran newspaper ads bemoaning "His Holiness chose Calp to bless the world of work," and showing the wares presented to him.

complaint about unfair competition, employers' organisations wondered what was wrong with the profit motive, and the Vatican had to issue a clarification.

mill testimonials — the Pope has a job until he dies and so has no pension problems to worry about, the Holy Father received nothing.

transmitters and partly to fund parishes. According to Franco Giuliano, who was in charge of the campaign: "It was an efficient way of communicating it was no problem for us. Anyway, it was OK for the Vatican and they're Jesuits."

update □ The Norwegian Industry Federation said yesterday that an offshore labour strike scheduled for next week would shut down 70 per cent of Norway's oil production. The strike is planned to begin at midnight on Tuesday and is expected to last for 2,000 to 2,500 workers at platforms run by Statoil, Phillips Petroleum, Amoco Corp, BP and Elf Aquitaine.

# Promise of cheaper drink leaves Finnish drunks ready to toast EU rules

Jon Henley in Helsinki

**E**VERY Saturday, shortly before 8pm, a strange ritual takes place on Finland's shopping streets. Normally reserved for Finland's 250 state-run liquor stores, the only ones in the country selling anything stronger than beer, are about to close — and they have no idea that a strike is planned for next week.

revenue last year. Founded to protect Finns from themselves, Alko's task was, in the words of a 1996 Helsinki alcohol inspector, "the distribution of an entirely superfluous commodity."

other Nordics, they go in for binge drinking, they go to get drunk. "We have a special relationship with alcohol," said one health ministry official. "You can't change a nation."

last. Equally worrying for Alko are estimates that up to 20 per cent of the alcohol in Finland may have been imported from neighbouring Estonia and Russia, where vodka costs a fifth of the Finnish price.

ing the Russian border with cartloads of beer 15 times a day. Stung by the revenue loss, the government has proposed restricting duty-free imports from non-EU countries. Finns eye its attempts to postpone the inevitable with disbelief.

Last week, the rush was worse than usual. Facing falling sales and an end to its monopoly, the straightforwardly named Alko is in trouble, and staff called a one-day strike in protest at planned job cuts.

other Europeans blanch. A cheap wine costs £2, a basic Scotch £24. Alcohol duties generated 9 per cent of all state

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# Milan's secretive bank elbowed from top spot

Robert Cox

**I**f Italian finance had its own version of the rankings that determine which securities firms reign on Wall Street and in the City, observers would be in for an interesting change in 1998.

"There is Mediobanca and there is IMI." That's fine with IMI, which is staking out territory on Piazza Affari, the heart of Milan's financial district, by allying with the country's leading commercial banks, Istituto Bancario San Paolo di Torino, Cariplo and Monte dei Paschi di Siena.

buttresses of Mediobanca's half-century domain over Italian finance comes as more experienced bankers are trying to do the same — and succeeding. Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs, Schroder and others have won some of the biggest advisory mandates. IMI has every reason to succeed. There is backing from Italian corporations and the government, which sees domestic competition in the investment banking industry in the country's interest.

# Update

□ The French industry minister, France Boretra, said on Wednesday that 1 billion francs (£130 million) would be set aside to help the country's 23,000 small and medium-sized firms secure growth by investing in new technologies between now and 1998. Half the money will be made available this year, allowing for equity-based support for innovative firms via the Caisse des Dépôts.

# Bob Geldof helps youth of Poland to go Atomic

SANCHIA BERG reports on the first post-communist music TV station

**B**OB Geldof has joined forces with Polygram and a Polish entertainment company to create the first post-communist music television — Atomic TV.

The music industry in Poland is small compared with that of western European countries. The International Federation for the Phonographic Industry estimated sales of around £100 million for the first six months of last year. But the Polish economy is said to be the fastest growing in Europe and, now an anti-piracy law has cut down bootleg copies of cassettes, the major international music publishers are moving in.



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# Finance Guardian

Flightless birds, bloodstock and chinchillas. All creatures great and small are used to gull the unwary. SARAH WHITEBLOOM and DAN ATKINSON uncover the natural history of investment scandals

## There's one born every minute

**O**STRICHES. Would you buy a flightless African bird and hope to make money? Someone, somewhere will. Some, somewhere has. Around 2,000 people have spent an estimated \$44 million on more than 3,600 ostriches, in what appears to be one of the classic "investment opportunities" of our time.

To City professionals it sounded too good to be true. Having done their sums, financiers said it was inconceivable that the returns promised would be possible. Other ostrich farmers, who run legitimate operations, maintained that the only way OFC could give investors the promised returns was to raise cash by selling birds to more investors. "A classic case of pyramid selling," claimed one farmer.

The firm was open seven days a week to take the money. And, though the DTI inquiry began last November, it is understood that the number of investors has grown rapidly since then. In March alone the firm is believed to have taken \$5 million.

Recent scandals have involved everything from chinchillas to newly-minted gold sovereigns. Then there is the classic investment in bloodstock. Sometimes the horses exist, sometimes they don't.

The lure of diamonds has also proved irresistible. For some of the people who rushed to buy gemstone "unit trusts" the high returns promised proved to be an illusion.

In the hope of ludicrously high returns — some 51.6 per cent a year *minimum* — investors flocked to buy birds from the Ostrich Farming Corporation. The offshore element in the deal — the farm is in Belgium — and the fact that there is no regulatory safety-net were, presumably, added incentives.

Last week, Nottinghamshire-based OFC was closed down by the Department of Trade and Industry after a secret investigation. The Official Receiver is trying to calculate how many individuals have lost out and how much money is owed to creditors.

An action group for owners, led by Stephen Whitmore, a Salisbury-based solicitor, has been started. He said yesterday that there is a "good prospect" investors will recover their birds, said to be individually tagged with microchips.

The fraud of the century, according to the Commercial Crime Bureau of the International Chamber of Commerce, is the racket that goes under the name "prime bank instru-

ments". Five billion dollars-worth of these "ghost securities" float around the world, and victims have included the Salvation Army and the Chicago Housing Authority.

### DIY guide for fraudsters

**A**N OFFSHORE base is a pre-requisite. Some of the best low-tax, low-regulation locations are close to home. Gibraltar may have tightened up, along with the Isle of Man, but Europe still bristles with "offshore" enclaves offering banking secrecy and protection from the prying eyes of supervisors.

Impressive documentation. Heavy paper covered in computer print and embossed with a beautiful company seal will comfort your victims and help you to ensure new recruits. It's easier to forge a document supposedly worth £5 million than to forge a fever.

Hard-to-check assets. The splendid paperwork will divert investors' attention from the near-invisibility of their investments. Whether it be a ruby mine in Sri Lanka or a vineyard in Zimbabwe, make sure the "asset" is difficult to visit.

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**20**

Roger Cowe

**H**EADLINES this week have once again proclaimed the golden age of cheap mortgages, accompanied by puzzled articles wondering why Britons are not spending the resulting riches.

The answer to that puzzle is simple — despite the steady fall in mortgage rates, the real cost of buying a house is still at historically high levels and actually represents the forced savings which are sometimes urged on the British Government, mimicking Draconian schemes in places such as Singapore.

In the supposedly benighted 1970s, and especially under the maligned Labour Government from 1974 to 1979, the cost of a mortgage was not just cheap, it was negative.

The actual rate did rise to more than 12 per cent in 1976, but in that year the rate of inflation was almost 17 per cent. Only in 1978 did the real mortgage rate (after deducting inflation) turn positive again.

The result of Mrs Thatcher's great homeowner revolution, and the deregulation of the financial sector, was a sharp rise in mortgage costs.

Never since 1980 has the real cost of borrowing been negative.

The result is that buying a house takes more out of salaries, for longer than it did in the 1970s. But the corollary is that the money being poured into houses is actually worth something, not being eroded by inflation.

In the 1970s you could buy a house knowing that the pain would quickly ease. In the first year the mortgage might take a third of your income. But with inflation up to 24 per cent in 1975, income could double in three or four years, while the cost of the mortgage stayed the same or even fell.

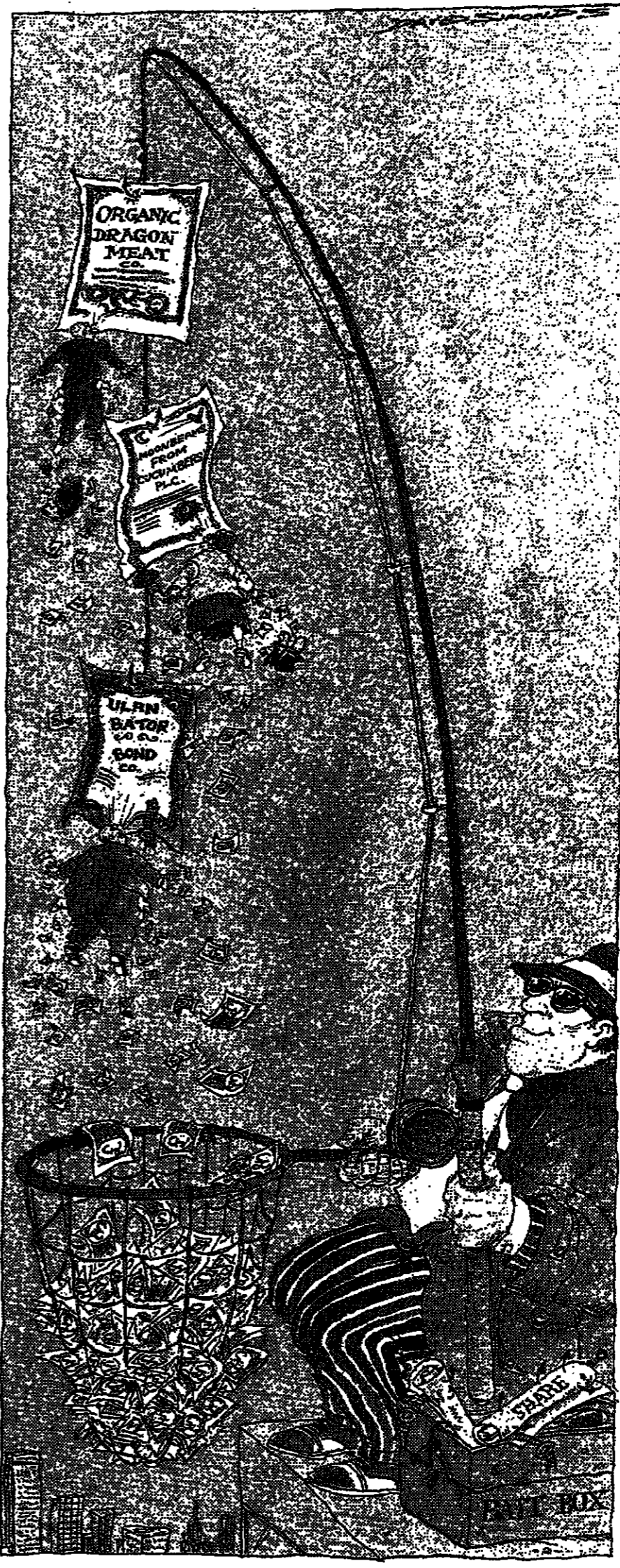
Housing is now much less affordable to begin with — the same net income buys a smaller property. To make matters worse, low inflation means that the pain of the initial mortgage just does not go away.

The slide in interest rates over the past few years has brought only minor relief, even to those who are not stuck on fixed rate mortgages.

As if all that wasn't bad enough, it isn't even possible to liberate cash by moving house.

The stubborn refusal of house prices in most parts of the country to rise even in line with general inflation means that the only way of freeing some capital for people who have bought since the mid-1980s is to move to a smaller house.

Next time you are told you've never had mortgages so good, remember the wonderful 1970s.



**Quick Crossword No. 8099**

**Across**

- 1 Neat and tidy (5-3,5)
- 3 Sure (7)
- 9 Impassive philosopher (5)
- 10 Sell (4)
- 11 Fish, source of caviare (8)
- 13 Lasso (6)
- 14 Human beings (6)
- 17 Propose (8)
- 19 Equitable — market (4)
- 21 Balanced (5)
- 22 Radical (7)
- 24 A provocation (3,3,2,1,4)

**Down**

- 1 Curve (3)
- 2 Associate (7)
- 3 Vivacity (4)
- 4 Set on fire (6)
- 5 Spectator — or another publication? (8)
- 6 Idler (5)
- 7 Story-teller (8)
- 10 Unpaid worker (3)
- 12 Flowering tree (8)
- 15 Tableland (7)
- 16 Give witness (6)
- 18 Hillock (5)
- 20 Volcano (4)
- 23 Slippery fish (3)

**Solution No. 8088**

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